starcourt

Season 3 Missing Moments by bella1985

Category: Stranger Things, 2016
Genre: Humor, Romance
Language: English
Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Mike W.
Status: In-Progress
Published: 2019-08-01 11:24:09
Updated: 2019-11-25 10:07:48
Packaged: 2019-12-12 15:02:53
Rating: T
Chapters: 7
Words: 33,359
Publisher: www.fanfiction.net
Summary: Missing moments or extended scenes from each episode of season 3. If you have any suggestion send them my way. All characters involved but with a focus on Mileven. Enjoy :)

1. Episode 1: Suzie do you copy?

AN: So stranger things has become my obsession. Season 3 was amazing, but I found myself thinking "I wish we could have seen between these two scenes" or "I wish I knew what they were thinking in that scene" Those thoughts drove me to write this story. Enjoy.

Third-person point of view

It had become a habit for Mike to come over and visit now that school was out for summer. Hop was finally starting to come around to letting El leave the cabin with rules that she couldn't be anywhere too crowed. Often when Mike was over they would play games, watch movies, listening to music….or start kissing.

Ever since their kiss at the snowball they've been inseparable. Mike says they're making up for lost time, after explaining to El it didn't mean they actually lost anything she had to agree. It was hard not being able to see Mike for over a year, of course, El did physically see him but he didn't see her. Now the more time El got to spend with him, the happier she was.

Hop on the other hand didn't seem very happy about it. El wasn't sure why he did promise her that she would get to see Mike when she was still in hiding. Now that she could he seemed to get mad quickly, especially with Mike.

Like when Hop got home from work today and saw Mike and El sitting in the living room he just grunted and began making his dinner. Since he was home Mike and El went into her bedroom, making sure to leave the door open three inches as per Hop's new rule.

Mike went over to my radio and turned it on to reasonable volume. El crawled onto her bed waiting for him to join her.

"What should we do?" El asked simply.

"I have an idea," Mike said leaning closer to kiss her.

"But Hop," She said leaning away slightly and looking towards to open door.

He's watching TV," Mike shrugged.

"But what if he checks in on us?" She asked biting her lip.

"If we hear him start to move, we each grab a book and pretend to be reading," Mike said grabbing the first two comics he could find and putting them on my bedside table.

Fool proof plan, Mike thought to himself.

"Okay," She smiled and leaned over to kiss him back.

Mike began singing along with the song as El tried to get him to stop. It wasn't that she didn't like his singing, she just wanted him to keep kissing her. She was also worried that he might attract attention from Hop.

They began kissing, which turned into "making out", a term El has recently learned from her friends. Both teens forgot that Hop could lean his chair back far enough to peek in without making any noise.

Their attention was suddenly torn away from each other when they heard the deep voice of El's father yell "HEY"

El looked up and locked eyes with her father. Without evening thinking she threw her hand out and closed the door with her powers.

"Why did you do that?" Mike panicked.

"I don't know!" El scrambled. "I didn't know what to do."

"Here," Mike said getting up to grab the comics off El's bedside table.

Outside the door, they heard hop get up and say something about the three-inch minimum. Then the door rattled

"Shit," Mike said handing El a book.

"El, open this door." Hop said on the other side.

"Ok open it," Mike said throwing himself horizontally on the end of El's bed. She scooted herself up to the headboard, so she was not close enough to touch Mike.

"Open the do-" Hop said becoming frustrated but El cut him off by opening the door with a tilt of her head.

They both put on their best innocent faces as they held their books. Hop on the other hand did not look pleased. They both knew they were in for it.

"What's wrong?" Mike said with a smile.

Once it left his mouth, he regretted it.

"Get out," Hop said in a deadpan voice.

Both teens sighed, knowing there was no arguing, they had been caught.

Mike grabbed his bag and headed over to the door before turning back.

"See you tomo-"He began saying.

"Out!" Hop said grabbing Mike by the arm and leading him towards the front door

"Bye!" El called after him.

Once he was outside Hop sighed and went back to his spot in the living room.

After Mike called El on the SuperCom and they had a good laugh about Hop's reaction, El laid in her bed smiling.

She rolled over to look at the clock.

oh well, he had to meet the others for their movie anyway she thought to herself. She was jealous that she couldn't go too, the mall

was too crowded. But, she knew she would see Mike and the rest of her friend's tomorrow to surprise Dustin.

Dustin's mom had agreed to leave the door open for the kids since she was in on the plan. The group got to the house early to go over the plan and finished the banner.

"Hey El," Will said coming out of Dustin's room. "Do you want to practice having the toys lead him out?"

Max, Lucas, Mike, and El were gathered around the coffee table coloring the welcome home banner.

"Okay," She said turning away from the group.

She closed her eyes and concentrated on the task at hand. She could feel the blood begin to trickle down her nose. Will went into the other room and watch the toys come to life. Slowly they all started making their way out to the living room.

"This is amazing!" Will yelled as he followed the toys out.

"Good work El," Mike said patting her shoulder.

She opened her eyes and the toys stopped moving.

"Just tell me when to stop," El said getting a tissue to wipe the blood from her nose.

"Of course," Mike said kissing her forehead.

"Okay we're all set," Lucas cried. "Will put the toys back in position"

Everything gathered up their belonging and hid in the backroom waiting for Dustin to arrive.

Not long after they heard Dustin come home and go to his room.

"This way," Mike lead the group to their designated hiding spot.

Max handed everyone a noisemaker with specific instructions to stay

quiet.

El's heart was beating super fast. She had never been a part of a surprise before and she was excited.

She stayed silent as she waited for her cue.

"Go," Will said after peering out into the hall. El closed her eyes played her role in the surprise.

The group tried not to laugh as they heard all the toys begin to toddle into the hallway. They knew Dustin was following because he was muttering "its just a dream, you're dreaming" to himself.

Once he got to the living room Mike turned to El.

"Now," He whispered. She opened her eyes and the toys stopped as planned.

They rounded the corner noisemakers in hand as Dustin inspected the toys. She tried not to make any noise.

El could hardly wait to see Dustin's reaction, she gripped Mike's hand tight as they got into position.

Noisemakers in their mouth, they watched as Max counted them down…3…2….1

What no one expected was that Dustin had a can of hairspray in his hand ready to attack.

"AHHHHHHH," He yelled.

El stumbled back as the hairspray attack began, Mike grabbed her and pulled her close to him and away from the spray.

Unfortunately for Lucas, he got most of the hit.

"Oh my god!" Dustin yelled. "Lucas I'm so sorry! You guys scared the shit out of me."

"Note to self don't surprise Dustin," Lucas said trying to rub his eyes.

"Oh god it burns"

"Here let's try to rinse it out," Max said leading him to the kitchen.

"Surprise!" Will said from the corner trying to break the awkward silence.

"Thanks, guys," Dustin said as he hugged his friends. "El that was so freaky, I had no idea what was happening."

El smiled, glad that her portion of the plan went off without a hitch.

"Hey I have something to show you guys," Dustin said. "Come on."

He led his three friends back to his room. As he went through his stuff El took hold of Mike's arm and leaned her head onto his shoulder.

"You okay?" Mike whispered.

"Yeah," She smiled.

Mike knew that she was probably getting tired. It had been a full day with their friends. Much more social interaction then she was used to. Mike too was getting restless but not because he was tired but because he wanted to be alone with El.

He loved hanging out with his friends but since El still had a curfew and ground rules to follow he was jealous that they couldn't hang out all the time like Max and Lucas.

"I call it the forever clock," Dustin said turning around to reveal what looked like a windmill with a clock attached. "Powered by wind, very useful in the apocalypse."

He handed it to Will who looked super interested in the new device.

"Then I give you the slammer," Dustin said showing them a hammer that kind of vibrated.

As he brought it closer to Mike and El, El instinctively backed away and Mike turned so she was more behind him. Protecting her in a

way but knowing Dustin wouldn't hurt her.

"Pretty neat huh?" He said turning around to get his bag.

Mike sighed wondering how many inventions from science camp he was going to have to hear about.

"But this is my masterpiece," He said unzipping the bag. "I'd like you to meet Cerebro"

They all got on their knees with curiosity. They all stared down at the pile of metal inside the bag.

El looked over at Mike and Will to make sure she wasn't missing anything; she had no idea what it was.

To her relief Mike spoke up; "What exactly are we looking at here?"

"An unassembled, one of a kind, battery-powered radio tower," Dustin smirked.

Everyone stayed silent for a moment. Mike tried not to laugh as El just nodded her head, unsure exactly of the use of this radio.

"So….it's a ham radio?" Will said slowly.

"The Cadillac of ham radios," Dustin explained. "This baby carries a crystal-clear connection over vast distances, I'm talking north pole to south. I can talk to my girlfriends whenever and wherever I chose."

At the word girlfriend everyone's eyes got wide and the suddenly became much for interested in the radio.

"Girlfriend?!" They all said in unison.

Dustin just smiled. "Come on you'll see"

He handed each of them a bundle of material to carry outside.

"Why a mountain?" El asked as they continued to climb.

She didn't want to say anything, but she was getting tired and it was

a hot day outside.

"We have to get up high for the radio to work," Dustin explained.

"Aren't we high enough?" Lucas asked.

As Dustin continued to explain Cerebro and his new girlfriend El leaned over to whisper in Mike's ear.

"Maybe if Dustin has a girlfriend, he won't make fun of us," El smirked.

"Yeah if she's real," Mike whispered back.

El giggled and continued to hike up the mountain.

"We should head back," Mike said with a wink.

El nodded.

"Hey guys," Mike called out. "This has been fun and all but…"

The rest of the group watched as he tapped his watch.

"I have to go home," El said simply.

"We're almost there," Dustin exclaimed.

"Sorry man," Mike explained. "Curfew…. come on"

He took El's had and began to head back.

"Good luck," El smiled.

She felt bad that they were abandoning their friends, but she wanted to spend some time with Mike before Hopper came home and kicked him out of the cabin again.

The couple ran back down the hill to head back to El's house.

By the time the couple arrived back at the cabin, it was late. Hopper was already home. Fortunately for Mike and El he was so

preoccupied with his heart to heart speech he didn't pay much attention to them.

They went into El's room and began their usual make out session.

Mike was the happiest he had been all day. He lived for these moments alone with his girlfriend. He couldn't wait for the day where they could go out on a date together. It seemed no matter where they were, they could never really get any time alone.

El thought Hopper was acting strange but pushed the thought aside for now while she spent her last few moments of that day with Mike.

Suddenly she heard knocking on the wall.

"Hey," Hop said.

El pulled back from Mike and looked at him with a suspicious look. He shrugged in return.

"Yes?" El responded.

"Can I talk to you guys a minute?" Hop asked nervously.

El motioned for Mike to move away from her as she used her powers to open on the door.

Hop walked in with a distressed look on his face. "Hi"

"Hi," They couple answered back in confusion.

Hop looked around awkwardly, grabbed El's desk chair and sat in front of them not knowing what to say.

El looked at her father with a puzzled expression. He wasn't yelling but he also wasn't saying anything, just looking at them. She was worried something was wrong.

He slowly turned around and turned off the radio. Now there was even more of an uncomfortable silence.

"Um….." Hopper attempted to start when his mind went blank.

El leaned forward a bit as if to say, "yes dad, go on."

"What I ugh needed to say to you" He paused momentarily as if rethinking his words. "What I wanted to say to you…. is that um."

"Uh oh," Mike said with a smirk, somewhat enjoying the discomfort Hopper was feeling. "I think were in trouble."

El let out a small laugh at Mikes statement. The chief did not find it funny and stared at Mike in disbelief. How dare he interrupt me, he thought. What a smug son of a bitch. As per Joyce's recommendation, he kept calm, no matter what they said.

"No…no nobody's in trouble okay?" He said trying to regain control of the situation. "I just..um .."

Mike felt like he had an upper hand here. He wasn't scared of Hopper. If Hop did anything to Mike El would never forgive her father. With this newfound confidence, Mike leaned over and whispered in El's ear.

"I think he's going to explode," He said quietly. El giggled once again

By this point, Hopper was seeing red. Everything Joyce had said to him was gone. He decided to deal with this his way. El wasn't the problem, it was Mike.

"You know what," Hop began. "Your mom called."

"What?" Mike asked.

Mike and Eleven stopped and stared at Hopper with confusion. This is not where they thought this conversation was going.

"Yeah," Hopper said enjoying his new plan. "She needs you home right away."

"Is everything okay?" Mike asked, unsure if this was for real or not.

"I don't think so," Hop said seriously. "It's your grandma."

With that Mike became more worried. His grandmother was getting

older and has fallen once before and had to go to the hospital.

Eleven looked over at Mike and when she saw his expression, she too became worried. She looked back at her father in disbelief.

"Come on I'll drive you," Hop said standing up and heading for the door. "El you stay here."

"Okay," She said quietly. She knew Mike needed to get home quick. "Bye Mike."

"Bye El," He said rushing out the door behind Hopper.

---

in the police cruiser, after Hop first confronts Mike

"Nod if you understand," Hopper said raising his voice at Mike.

Mike was in shock; Hop's lost his god damn mind. He nodded furiously and continued to do as he said.

The cruiser took off out of the woods towards Mikes house.

"Here's what's gonna happen," Hop said feeling like balance had he restored, he had the upper hand.

"You and El have spent far too much time together over the past 6 months. It's CONSTANT, and I've had enough of it. You are not going to come over and see her tomorrow." Hop explained.

"But-" Mike began to protest but was silenced by the look Hop gave him.

"No buts," He said trying not to raise his voice too much. "I don't care what you say, but you are not going to see her tomorrow, you're not going to come over to the cabin. And if I find out that you did come over, and I WILL find out if you do, then you are never going to see her again."

Panic began to set in as Mike registered what Hop was saying. This man's insane, would he keep El away from him? He was able to keep El a secret for over a year in the cabin. Mike didn't want to risk it so

he agreed.

"Okay," Mike sighed in defeat.

"Good," Hop said as he stopped the cruiser in front of Mikes house.

"So when can I come over and see her again?" Mike asked.

"I'll tell you," Hop said simply.

Mike feared arguing with this crazy man, so he just opened his door and went inside his house. That night he laid in bed, his head spinning with ideas. What would he tell El tomorrow? He had a bad feeling about this, he was stuck between a rock (lying to El) and a hard place (Hop never letting him see El again).

When Hopper arrived back at the cabin after dropping Mike off, El was waiting for him at the door.

"Is his Nana okay?!" El asked.

"Don't worry," Hop said placing his hands on her shoulders. "It was a false alarm."

"Oh," El said breathing a sigh of relief.

"It's late," Hop said. "we should head to bed."

"Can we watch Miami Vice first?" El asked shyly.

"Sure kid," Hop smiled. "But just one."

"Compromise," El smiled back at him as they settled down together on the couch.

Alright, first chapter out of the way. Let me know what you think! If you have any ideas for missing moments in the next few episodes, please let me know. I'm not going to change anything that happens during the show just adding to it. Thanks!

2. Episode 2: Mall Rats

AN: Welcome to the second chapter. I'm glad people seem to be enjoying this story. Please leave a review and tell me some missing moments you would like to see. Alright, so we all know what's coming in this chapter, the dreaded break up. But, I was very curious what El was thinking throughout the majority of the episode. Hope you enjoy!

El looked at the clock again, it was after 9, where was Mike? Becoming restless she went out on the porch to look around. Maybe she would see him coming on his bike through the woods. She paced around and when there was no sign of him, she began to worry.

What if he fell off his bike and got hurt? What if he's sick? She thought to herself. She continued to pace the porch becoming more and more frightened by the minute.

At his house, Mike was also pacing back and forth in his basement. He anxiously waited for the phone to ring. He secretly wished El wouldn't call, and that she wouldn't notice he wasn't there, but he knew that would never happen. Part of him thinks he should have called her first, but he chickened out. He hated having to lie to El, friends don't lie! But he knew he had to because Hop's a maniac who hates joy.

The phone ringing brought him back to reality. He knew his mother would pick up the phone, then he heard her yelling his name. His palms began to sweat as he picked up the phone.

"Hello," He answered.

As soon as El heard his voice she breathed a sigh of relief, he was okay.

"It's nine thirty-two where are you?" She asked.

"Sorry I…I was just about to call," Mike stammered. "I um…can't see you today."

El's heart sank a little. "Why not?"

"It's my Nana," Mike said confident in his lie that technically Hopper thought of. "She's very sick"

"But... Hop said that your Nana was okay," El explained very confused. "That it was a false alarm."

Mike wanted to punch the wall. Of course, Hop would say everything was fine, El would have been worried sick when he returned to the cabin. Why was he so stupid!

"Yeah, that's what we thought it was… at first," Mike stumbled through his lie. "She took a real turn for the worst."

"Oh," El said feeling bad that someone in Mikes family wasn't doing well.

"Yeah," Mike said then thought he would make it sound a little worse. "We think she might….die."

"What!?" A new voice sounded through the phone.

No! This could not get any worse! Mike thought to himself. His mother had been listening to his whole conversation. Mike quickly held his hand over the receiver.

"MOM GET OFF THE PHONE!" He screamed. "HOW MANY TIMES!?"

Even with his hand on the receiver, El could hear Mike and he yelled to Mrs. Wheeler. She was so confused.

"DID NANA CALL!?" Karen yelled both into the phone and downstairs to Mike.

"NO MOM," Mike pleaded desperately. "JUST GET OFF THE PHONE!"

Karen was confused and slightly embarrassed as she hung up the receiver.

Mike wanted to die right then and there. He knew there was no way El was going to believe him now. He was toast.

"Sorry about that," He nervously laughed.

"Was that your mom?" El asked even though she already knew the answer.

Now she was suspicious. If Mikes Nana was really sick, his mom would know about it. He was lying to her.

"Yeah she's so upset she's making so sense," Mike said attempting to gain control of his story. "Because we have to go to the nursing home…to see Nana."

El pondered this for a moment. Maybe Mike was making up an excuse because he had something to do today. She wasn't sure why he didn't just tell her instead of lying.

"You can come over after?" El tried to compromise.

"No!" Mike said too quickly. "I mean…I just think I need to be alone today….with my….feelings?"

Mike was a terrible liar, El didn't know what was happening but she was not pleased.

"Do you lie?" She asked frustrated.

She was giving him a chance to come clean and tell her exactly what was going on.

"What? No!" Mike said trying to sound convincing. "Friends don't lie."

Mike knew that she could see through his lie and decided he had to get off the phone as fast as possible. He put his hand over the receiver again.

"What mom?" He yelled to no one. "My moms calling me, better go, talk to you tomorrow, miss you already bye."

And with that, he hung up the phone.

El stood in her room, phone to her ear, wondering what just happened. Why would Mike lie to her like this?!

Mike hit his head against the phone a few times. That could not have gone any worse. He should have just told El what happened with Hop.

"Ughhhh," Mike groaned as he sat on the sofa, head in his hands.

"Michael!" Mrs. Wheeler called as she walked down the stairs.

"Not now Mom," Mike groaned.

"Why are you lying to that poor girl?" Mrs. Wheeler asked with her hands on her hips. "I taught you better than that."

"Mom you don't understand," Mike said. "It's complicated."

"Well that was very rude of you to lie about Nana like that," She said gently seeing that her son was going through something.

"It's also rude to eavesdrop!" Mike exclaimed.

Karen turned red with embarrassment, "I know and I'm sorry."

Mike still had his head in his hands, Karen could see he was upset but didn't want to push him.

"She's a sweet girl Mike," Karen said gently as she turned to walk up the stairs. "You can fix this."

"I'll try mom," Mike sighed.

Karen headed upstairs to finish packing for the pool. She had met this girl that Mike has become so smitten with a few times. She was pretty, shy and sweet. She hoped her son would come to his senses and fix his mistakes.

Once Hopper had left for work El decided she needed advice and she knew exactly who to go to. She was a little nervous because although she and Max were friends, they had never hung out just the two girls. El walked quickly over to Max's house, still full of anger after her conversation with Mike.

She found Max outside on her skateboard as usual. The board got away from her and began gliding towards El. She stepped on the edge and caught the board the way she had seen Max do it many times.

Max looked at the shy girl with confusion. She looked angry and she hoped El wasn't angry with her.

"Hi," El said softening slightly.

"Hi?" Max said unsure where this conversation was going.

"Can we talk?" El asked shyly.

"Sure," Max said. "Come with me."

She led El silently into her house (no one was home), and into her bedroom. She and El sat on the bed for a moment, neither girl knowing what to say.

"So…" Max said awkwardly. "What's up?"

"I need boyfriend advice," El said biting her lip. "I thought you might be able to help."

"Oh boy," Max laughed. "Trouble in paradise?"

"What?" El looked confused and Max realized she didn't understand her turn of phrase.

"I just mean did you and Mike have a fight?" The redhead asked.

"I'm not sure," El said furrowing her brow.

"Alright," Max said standing up. "Start from the beginning and tell me what happened."

"Well," El said taking a deep breath. "He didn't show up to the cabin this morning. I got worried and called his house. He picked up and said his Nana was sick. I asked if he could come over after and he said he had to be alone with his feelings?"

"Idiot," Max muttered under her breath.

"Then his mom was on the phone and she was confused, and Mike told her to get off the phone," El rambled. "I asked him if he was lying and he said no."

Max paced the length of her room as she listened to El's story.

"And then he said he missed me and then he just hung up," El concluded.

"He's a piece of shit," Max accused.

"What?" El was shocked to hear someone describe Mike like that, unless they were teasing as the boys often do.

"Mike doesn't have jack shit to do today and his Nana obviously isn't sick," Max exclaimed. "I guarantee you him and Lucas are playing Atari right now."

"But friends don't lie," El said.

She hoped if she came and talked with Max, she would reassure El that she misunderstood, and everything was fine. She did not want to believe that Mike and lied to her. One of the first things Mike taught her was that friends don't lie.

"Yeah well boyfriends lie," Max explained. "All….the….time."

El didn't want to believe it. But in her heart, she knew Mike's story didn't make sense. She wanted to give him the benefit of the doubt. Maybe he had a good reason for lying?

"So….what do I do?" El asked sadly.

Max sat on the bed with El, she had a game plan ready. She had done this many times with Lucas.

"You're going to stop calling him, you're going to ignore his called," Max explained. "As far as your concerned he doesn't exist."

"Doesn't exist?" El asked.

El couldn't imagine ignoring Mike this way. But, she was swayed by

the fact that Max was more experienced than her when it came to boyfriends.

"He treated you like garbage, you're going to treat him like garbage," Max smiled. "Give him a taste of his own medicine."

"Give him the medicine," El repeated trying to remember all this new information.

"umm hmm," Max nodded approvingly. "And if he doesn't fix this, if he doesn't explain himself, dump his ass."

El looked at Max with wide eyes. She had witnessed Max dump Lucas many times, but they always got back together eventually. She had also seen people "get dumped" on all the tv shows she watched in the cabin.

Max could sense the shy girl's heartbreak. She decided to put a plan in motion.

"Come on," Max said taking El's hands.

"Where are we going?" El asked curiously.

"To have some fun," Max laughed. "There more to life then stupid boys you know."

El gave a small smile and she followed Max down the street towards a bus stop.

"We're going to wait here and the bus will pick us up soon," Max explained as they sat on the bench. "Have you ever been on a bus?"

"Yes," El said simply. Her mind wandered back to when she was in Chicago with her sister Kali. She took a bus home when she realized Hop and her friends were in trouble.

El look warry of getting on the bus but Max patted her on the back.

"It's going to be fun," She smiled. "Trust me."

When they took their seats on the bus Max began getting excited. She

had never really had close friends who were girls. She loved the guys but having girl time was important too.

It wasn't a very long trip, the girls got off the bus and El looked up at the giant mall.

"So what do you think?" Max asked excitedly.

El didn't respond she looked around at the crowds of people nervously.

"What's wrong?" Max asked.

"Too many people," El said as her eyes darted around. "Against the rules."

"Seriously?" Max whispered. "You have superpowers, what's the worst that could happen?"

El thought about it for a moment. Hop would say it was too dangerous and someone might recognize her. She looked back at Max, she enjoyed Max's go with the flow attitude. She was the first person to say "whatever" to the rules that people had laid out for Eleven.

She felt herself getting excited with this idea of breaking the rules and having fun. She smirked and nodded her head to Max.

"Let's go," She smiled as Max took her hand and lead her into the mall.

Once inside El couldn't believe her eyes. This place was huge! There were two levels, people everywhere and too many stores for her to count. She had never seen so much, she couldn't stop turning herself to take it all in.

"What should we do first?" Max asked.

El had no idea how to respond, she was too overwhelmed with choice.

"You've never been shopping before have you?" Max asked

knowingly.

El just shook her head no. Max felt a little sad that El had such a sheltered life. But she was excited that she was going to be the person to let her experience it for the first time.

"Well I guess we're just going to have to try everything," She laughed. "Ooo come on,"

Max grabbed El's hand again and lead her to the Gap. El loved all the colors and different styles she saw in the store. She had never seen so many items of clothing in one place. She couldn't help but touch everything to see how it felt.

She looked up at a blue polo shirt on one of the displays.

"Do you like that?" Max asked once she caught El's gaze.

El was about to respond when she frowned and turned to her friend.

"How do I know," El started slowly. "What I like?"

"You just try things on," Max shrugged. "Until you find something that feels like you."

"Like me?" El said whipping her head around to Max in disbelief.

No one had ever asked Eleven what she liked when it came to clothes. Ever since she could remember in the lab she wore what was given to her. Then Mike gave her his spare clothes, and then Hopper couldn't exactly take her shopping when she was hiding in the cabin. He tried his best and for that El was grateful.

"Yeah," Max smiled. "Not Hopper, not Mike, you."

El grew excited by the new possibility of choosing anything to wear.

"I want to try," She smiled picking up one of the blue polo shirts.

"Let me see if it's your size," Max said looking closely at the tag. "You'd probably be a small."

El nodded her head as she watched Max show her where the sizes were on the tag.

"We're good," Max smiled showing El the "S" on the tag. "What else?"

Enthused by her newfound freedom El and Max ran around the store gathering a large pile of clothes that El found interesting.

"Ok," Max said leading El over to the changing areas. "Go in here and you can change, once you finished putting on an outfit you can come out and look in the mirror so I can see."

"Ok," El nodded taking her pile of clothes into the dressing room and closing the curtain. Privacy, as Mike taught her on the first night they met.

El decided to start with the blue polo and some yellow pants she found fun. They had these strange elastic things which El wasn't sure what to do with.

She slowly came out of the dressing room, when she spotted Max by the full-length mirror she went over to her.

"Here let me help," Max said helping her to put the suspenders over her shoulders.

El walked closer to the mirror and looked at herself in awe.

"Here I found this to go with it," Max said handing her a flat yellow hat.

El placed it near the top of her forehead and Max laughed.

"No no," She giggled and placed it on the top of El's head. "Here."

"What do you think?" She asked as El stared into the mirror.

"It's fun," El laughed as she pulled the suspenders away from herself. She let them go with a snap and both girls broke out into laughter.

"Okay next outfit," Max smiled as she pushed El back into the dressing room.

El decided to try on a white baggy shirt/ skirt combo. It had fun blue, yellow and red splatter print on it.

Feeling more confident in this game of trying things on, she bounced out from the dressing room to show Max.

"This is fun," El said spinning around in the mirror.

"I like it!" Max said commenting on the outfit. "Here let's try a belt it will accentuate your waist."

She went over to a display and chose both a red and yellow wide belt. She came back and held them up to El in the mirror.

"Which do you like better?" she asked.

"Hmm," El pondered looking into the mirror. "This one."

Max helped her fasten the yellow belt around her waist.

"It looks good!" Max smiled as El continued to spin around in the mirror.

El enjoyed how the skirt moved while she moved.

Max joined in my turning El around by her shoulders until she became too dizzy and fell into Max.

"Alright enough spinning," Max laughed. "what's next?"

El made her way back to the dressing room, she had one outfit left. A black romper with some fun neon designs.

When she came out of the dressing room Max was looking in the mirror while trying on sunglasses. When she saw El behind her she spun around quickly.

"You look amazing!" Max smiled.

El turned to look at herself in the mirror. She saw one of the girls in the store tossing her hair in different ways. She decided to try it. She flipped her hair over so it was parted on the side instead of the

middle. It gave her hair some more volume.

"I like," El smiled.

"Perfect!" Max said. "Which sunglasses do you like better I can't decide."

"These," She held up and white and blue pair, then a red pair. "Or these."

"I think the red," El agreed.

"It's settled," Max smiled. "Go get your clothes, you can wear the romper out once we pay for it."

"No," El said. "I don't have any money."

She was having fun trying on the clothes, she didn't need to buy them now. She would ask Hopper another time.

"It's okay," Max said simply. "I have all my holiday money saved up, my gift to you."

"Really?" El asked unsure.

She felt bad that Max wanted to spend her money on her. But she really did like the romper, it was the first piece of clothing that felt like her.

"I want to," Max assured her as they went to the register. "It's what friends are for."

El smiled at the term friends. She liked hanging out with Max, doing girl things and getting to know her better.

Once they paid El became even more excited to explore the rest of the mall. She grabbed Max's arm and the girls made their way out of the store. They walked arm and arm, El practically bouncing with excitement.

"What now?" El asked.

Max looked around trying to think of what to do. Suddenly she caught sight of the photo studio.

"I have an idea," Max laughed talking El's hand and running across the mall.

"What is this place?" El asked.

"It's a photo studio," Max explained. "You dressed up in these over the top outfits and they take your picture."

El was intrigued by all the photos displayed around the room. Mostly girls dressed in shiny clothes, lots of jewelry and fun accessories.

"My aunt gave me a gift certificate for a photo session," Max explained. "I never really wanted to do it but I thought maybe it would be fun to do it together…..you know…if you want."

El turned to look at Max who was unsure of what the response would be.

"Fun," El nodded in agreement.

"Can I help you, ladies?" A man with curly hair and a tie asked at the counter.

"I have this gift certificate for one of the photo sessions," Max said handing it to the man.

"Fantastic," The man said leading the girls over to the set up with all the costumes and backdrops.

"Pick anything you like," The man said getting his camera set up.

"Come on," Max said leading El over to the wardrobe. "What should we wear first?"

El picked up two shiny metallic blouses and handed one to Max. "These?"

"Yes!" Max smiled putting it on over her shirt. "And these!"

She held up two shiny headbands with flowers on them. The girls continued to add accessories until they had white gloves, earrings and a bunch of pearl necklaces.

"You look fabulous," The photographer said.

He had the girls stand in front of a neon splatter backdrop.

Max tried to explain to El how they should pose. El thought back to the girls in the display photos out front, and copied their poses.

The girls giggled their way through the photoshoot. Stopping only to change up the shirts they were wearing.

"We will send the photos to your address when they are ready," The receptionist told Max when they were finished.

"That was fun," El laughed as Max lead her to the next destination.

"In here," Max said as they entered a shoe store.

"Wow," El exclaimed as she looked around at all the different shoes.

"How does anyone walk in these?" Max asked.

El turned to find Max holding a pair of stiletto high heel shoes.

"Don't know," She said with wide eyes.

"Mom tried to put me in a shorter pair once," Max laughed. "It did not go well; I almost rolled my ankle."

El looked over at a small pair of multi-color heels.

"You should try them on," Max smiled. "Have you ever worn heels before?'

El shook her head. She had seen very pretty ladies walk so confidently in them on TV but El couldn't quite figure it out.

"I'll help you," Max said as El put the shoes on over her socked feet.

She stood like a baby deer and began to take a few cautious steps.

Max held her arm for support, trying not to laugh as she went along.

Suddenly El caught the toe of the shoe behind her ankle and fell forward. Both girls began a fit of laughter. It wasn't until Max helped El up that they noticed a group of girls staring and rolling their eyes at them.

"Ignore them," Max laughed turning El away. "Those girls are bitches anyway."

"Bitches?" El asked as she put her shoes back on and they left the store.

"They aren't very nice," Max explained. "That's Stacy and her friends. Dustin tried to ask Stacy to dance at the snowball and she was so mean about it."

El remembered Dustin saying how hurt he was by that, but then he got to dance with Nancy. El turned back to look at the girl again.

"Give her the medicine?" El asked with a sly smile.

"What?" Max asked, then understood what El was talking about, she wanted to get revenge on Stacy for Dustin. "But how?"

"Leave it to me," El smiled.

The girls walked around the food court for a while until they saw Stacy and her friends with a cute boy. Max followed El as she hid around the corner from the girls.

"Watch this," El smiled as she focused on Stacy and the drink in her hand. With a flick of her head, Stacy's drink exploded everywhere!

El and Max jumped in surprise. Stacy's face was priceless.

"Let's go!"

"See what did I tell you?" Max giggled as they ran to the ice cream shop. "There's more to life then-"

"Stupid boys," El joined in.

And at this moment she believed it, she was having a great time without the boys. She was getting to do all kinds of things she never had before.

"Want some ice cream before we leave?" Max asked.

"Yes," El nodded eagerly.

When they walked up to the register Steve was working.

"Can I have a scoop of strawberry please?" Max ordered then looked to El.

"Vanilla please," She said.

"With whipped cream," Max added for her.

"And sprinkles," El giggled.

"Coming right up," Steve said as he went over to talk to his co-worker.

"Have a good day?" Max asked El as they waited.

"Yes," She smiled. "Thank you, Max."

"Of course," She smiled shyly. "It's been really fun."

"Here you go," Steve said bringing over two ice cream cones.

"Thanks," The girls replied while taking their first few licks.

"Wait for a second," Steve said looking at El with a confused expression. "Are you even allowed to be here?"

The girls just looked at one another and giggled as they ran out of the store.

"ugh okay," Steve said to himself.

"Okay let's go out and wait for the bus," Max said as they headed for the entrance to the mall. "Want to trade?"

El smiled and gave her ice cream to Max. As she began to enjoy the rich strawberry flavor, she saw a look of disbelief on Max's face.

"Oh, you've got to be shitting me," Max said.

When El turned to look in the same direction her heart sank. It was Lucas, Will, and Mike. Max had been right; his Nana wasn't sick and they had been at the mall all day too. Max began to walk over to the boys and El followed. She could feel the hurt and anger rising and making her face feel hot.

"Well isn't this a nice surprise," Max said as the boys stopped with wide eyes on El.

Mike dropped his bike and stared El dead in the eyes.

"What…are you doing here," He said pointing at his girlfriend.

"Shopping," El said in a sassy voice as if it wasn't obvious.

"This is her new style," Max said with a smirk. "What do you think?"

"What's wrong with you?" Mike said getting frustrated with the redhead in front of him. "You know she's not allowed to be here."

"What is she your little pet?" Max asked.

A pet was something you kept in the house all the time, that's what it felt like everyone was trying to do to El with all their rules.

"Yeah," El agreed. "Am I your pet?"

"What?" Mike exclaimed. "No!"

He had no idea where this was coming from, El never said anything like this before. He knew it was all Max.

"Then why do you treat me like garbage?' She said getting frustrated with all Mikes lies.

"What?" Mike asked confused.

"You said Nana was sick," El said.

"She is! She is….she is sick," He said looking to Lucas for support.

"She's super sick," Lucas agreed. "That's why we're here actually,"

"Yeah yeah were shopping not for us but for her….for Nana," Mike stuttered.

"For Nana!" Lucas cried.

El couldn't believe that Mike was sticking to this lie. She knew it wasn't true and it hurt her that he would treat her this way. Friends don't lie!

"Also we're here to get a gift for you," Mike sighed. "But we couldn't find anything that suited you and I only have like three dollars and fifty cents so it's hard."

"Super hard," Lucas agreed. "It's expensive."

El softened a bit at Mikes the last statement, that she believed. It was the first truthful thing he said all day. She decided to give him one last chance, to tell the truth.

"You lie," She said slowly. "Why do you lie?

Mike looked at El, unsure of what to say. El's heart hurt as he remained silent, determined to stick to his lie. Suddenly El heard the bus stop and she knew that she had to get on it to make it home before Hop.

She turned back to look at Max then at Mike. She could hear Max's words in her head from earlier.

"*If he doesn't fix this if he doesn't explain himself… dump his ass."*

El took a deep breath and walked closer to Mike. Max was right; he wasn't being nice, treating her like garbage and it was time to give him the medicine.

"I dump your ass," She spat the words out like a bitter taste.

Mike was taken aback by her words, they didn't match the pain in her

eyes. He stared down at her confused as if he didn't hear her.

Max couldn't believe her ears; she had taught El well.

And with that El spun on her heels and headed back to the bus, Max following behind her. Mike continued to rack his brain to figure out what just happened.

The girls were silent until they got on the bus and sat down. Max turned to El and gave her a high five as they both giggled.

"That was amazing," Max said. "Way to give him a taste of his own medicine."

On the curb, Mike looked on as the bus pulled away and down the road. He wasn't even listening to Lucas and Will argue about D &D. He felt so stupid. How could he keep his lie going this long, she knew he was lying and now she dumped him. He was sad but angry because he knew it was Max's fault for giving El all these new ideas, and he hated it. What was he supposed to do now?

I hope you enjoyed this chapter. Sorry, it took a little while, I've been away. I hope I did the shopping trip justice. Review and let me know what else you'd like to see. Thanks!

3. Episode 3: The missing lifeguard

An: Hello readers! I am so sorry this chapter took a bit longer. I found it a bit more difficult to write. There were a few scenes I thought about doing that didn't make the cut, I am sorry if it was one that you wanted to see. I just didn't feel I did them justice. I hope you enjoy!

After the girls got off the bus

"What time is it?" El asked Max as they walked to her house.

"4:30," She responded.

"I should head home," El said sadly.

"Do you want to have a sleepover?" Max asked wanting to keep the fun going.

"Sleep-over?" El repeated.

"Yeah I can get my stuff and stay at your cabin for the night," Max explained. "We can have fun and play games and stuff."

"That sounds like fun!" El smiled.

"Would Hopper be okay with it?" Max asked.

"Yes," El said confidently.

She knew Hopper wouldn't mind if she had a friend over unless that friend was Mike. She also remembered Hopper said he was having dinner with Joyce tonight so he would be home late.

Max went inside to gather her clothes and things for her first sleepover in Hawkins.

Once the girls got to the cabin, El showed Max around. Once they were in her room Max got out some supplies.

"I brought some magazines if we want to look through them," She

said taking a small pile out of her bag.

El instructively turned on the radio, what she used to do anytime Mike was over, and sat on the bed.

"I love this song," Max said getting up to dance along with the music.

El flipped through the pages then found a large signed photo of a boy. El had to admit he was handsome.

"Oh, you found Ralph Macchio," Max laughed as she kneeled beside El.

"Macchio?" El asked not sure what to think of that name.

"Yeah, he's the karate kid," Max explained then lifted her arm only to bring it down quickly. "Hiya!"

The action made El jump but she couldn't help but laugh at her friend.

"He's so hot right?" Max sighed. "I bet he's an amazing kisser too."

El looked at Max with wide eyes. She couldn't believe she just said that. El thought of kissing as something that people who really liked each other as "more than friends" did. She found it silly that Max thought about kissing this boy she didn't even know.

"Hey ugh," Max began as she sat next to El on her bed. "Is Mike a good kisser?"

Yes, El wanted to say immediately but stopped herself. She felt a bit embarrassed that Mike was the only boy she's ever kissed. She figured Max had plenty of boyfriend experience.

"I don't know," El shrugged. "He's my first boyfriend."

"Ex-boyfriend," Max smirked.

She was still so proud of how El handled Mike at the mall. She really gave him a taste of his own medicine.

El didn't respond she just looked disappointed. Her heart ached a little when Max brought up her breakup. Max claims it was the right thing but El wasn't so sure anymore. Yes, Mike did something wrong, he lied, but El wasn't sure she wanted to be without him this way. It made her feel lost.

When Max saw the look of disappointment on El's face she knew how to cheer her up.

"Hey don't worry about it okay?" She said giving her friend an encouraging smile. "He'll come crawling back to you in no time begging for forgiveness."

El responded with a small smile as Max continued. She hoped Mike would explain himself and everything could go back to the way it was.

"I guarantee you him and Lucas are like totally wallowing in self-pity and misery like *ohhhh I hope they take us back*," Max said while doing an impression of the boys. Both girls giggled at the thought.

"God what I wouldn't give to see their stupid faces," Max sighed.

El then got an idea, she technically could see their faces right now, if she used her powers.

"What is it?" Max asked when she saw her friend's expression.

"What if I could?" El smirked.

"What do you mean?" Max asked intrigued.

"My powers," El tried to explain. "I can go into the void; a dark place and I can find people and watch what they're doing if I concentrate on them."

"No way!" Max said getting excited. "Okay, what do we need?"

"Turn the radio to static and I need a blindfold," El explained looking around her room.

El went to get a piece of black fabric that she used to use when she

visited Mike while she was stuck in the cabin. Holding the fabric in her hand brought back all the memories of Mike calling her for 353 days. She really hoped when she saw Mike now, he wasn't angry and that he wanted her back too.

"Got it!"

El was brought back to reality by her friend managing to get the radio onto a static channel. El went over and sat in front of the dresser and tied the blindfold over her eyes.

"Is this really gonna work?" Max asked taking a seat on the edge of the bed.

El just nodded her head confidently, trying to get ready for her task.

"Holy shit this is insane-" Max began to ramble.

"Max," El warned as she tried to concentrate.

"Yeah quiet, sorry." She said quickly as she watched her friend sit on the floor.

As she concentrated El could slowly start to hear Mikes voice. She tried to block out all the other noises and focus on him. Before she knew it she was in the void. Ahead of her, she saw Mike, Lucas, and Will.

She stepped closer and took in the scene. Mike was laying on the couch in his basement while Lucas paced in front of him. Will looked distracted in the corner setting up a game of D&D.

Max continued to watch El, unable to tell if her powers were working.

"I see them," El said to Max.

"What are they doing," Max asked as she sat on the floor next to El.

"Eating," El said simply.

And they were, El watched with slight disgust and Mike stuffed

potato chips into his mouth. It reminded her of what Hopper does sometimes.

"I just don't understand what I did to deserve this," He said with his mouth full.

"Nothing, nothing" Lucas exclaimed. "That's my whole point you were the victim here."

El looked on as she moved closer. She saw junk food wrappers all over the coffee table as well as cans of Coke.

"I know it's just why is she treating me this way?" Mike mumbled. "I don't know."

"Mike," Lucas sighed putting his hands to his face.

"What did I do wrong?! What did I do wrong?!" Mike yelled around his food.

El wasn't exactly sure what was happening. Mike looked upset but she wasn't sure he was wallowing in self-pity the way Max had described. He didn't seem angry either, just confused.

"Mike stop," Lucas yelled trying to get his friends attention. "relax, just relax."

"Stop asking rational questions," Lucas continued.

"I know I know," Mike sighed. "You're right you're right."

"Yeah," Lucas agreed.

"Because woman act on emotion and not logic," Mike said.

"Precisely," Lucas smiled. "It's a totally different species."

It appears Mike is getting help from Lucas the way Max helped her, El thought to herself.

"They say we are species," El said confused to Max.

"What?" Max said not understanding the context of the conversation.

"Emotion not logic," El continued.

"What!" Max exclaimed.

From Max's reaction, El could tell these things weren't good. She continued to watch the boys with curiosity.

"Guys it's ready," Will said finally turning to his friends.

"Will not right now," Lucas said to his friend as if it was obvious, they didn't want to play.

"They broke up with you!" Will spat back. "What else is there to talk about?"

El had never heard Will get so upset. It was a new side of him.

"Tons," Lucas countered.

"Yeah we're trying to solve the great mystery of the female species," Mike said from his spot on the couch.

Suddenly Mike stopped and burped very loud. El scrunched her face in disgust. She knew you weren't supposed to make that loud of a noise in public. And if you did you were to say excuse me.

"Dude you can smell the nacho cheese," Mike laughed to his friends.

Will looked just as disgusted as El was. Lucas smirked and turned to Mike.

"I got that beat," He said.

"What?" Mike asked.

"Oh no," Will groaned.

El watched on, unsure of what was happening.

"No Lucas no!" Both Will and Mike yelled.

The noise coming from Lucas started El into coming out of the void.

"What? What happened?" Max asked.

El couldn't help but fall over in a fit of giggles.

"What's wrong?" Max asked as she joined in on her friend's laughter.

Suddenly both girls heard Hopper's cruiser pull into the driveway.

Quickly El put away the black cloth and wiped the blood from her nose.

"One minute," El said as she laid on the floor with a magazine. She patted the spot next to her. "Dad's going to come check on us."

Max silently turned on the radio and laid down next to her friend. They looked thru the magazine wordlessly.

El heard the door open then some weird grunts she couldn't make out. She heard something about three inches then the door burst open.

Both girls looked up in surprise. Hop has rarely ever barged into El's room this way. Only if something happened or she had a nightmare. Hop looked surprised too, his eyes were wide as he stared down at the girls.

"Do you knock? Jeez," Max said cautiously.

"Yeah jeez!" El parroted.

"Wow wow hey hey I'm sorry," Hop said super confused. "I thought that ughhh…"

El and Max both knew exactly what he thought.

"Mikes not here," Max said simply.

"Max wanted to have a sleepover," El said testing out the new word.

Hop couldn't believe his ears, his daughter having a regular old sleepover with a friend.

"Is that…," El began slowly. "okay?"

"Yeah…yeah yeah," He stammered. "Yeah, your parents know about it?"

"Yup," Max nodded.

El looked at her guardian with her mouth open and her brow furrowed. Something was different about him.

"Yeah it's cool," Hop slurred. "Yeah, that's really cool."

After a few more minutes of all three staring at each other Max decided to break the silence.

"Did you need something?" Max asked as El looked to the floor slightly embarrassed.

"No no no I'll…I'll leave… I'll just let….I'll leave," He said as he shut the door finally leaving the room.

"Sorry," El said slightly embarrassed by her father.

"No worries," Max laughed. "I think he's a little drunk."

"Drunk?" El repeated.

"Yeah when adults drink a little too much alcohol they start feeling a little silly," Max tried to explain in simple terms.

"Oh," El said nodding. Hop was acting different, that was probably it, he said he was going to dinner with Joyce they must have been drinking.

"Okay so tell me what happened?" Max said sitting up from the floor.

"Lucas and Mike were talking, Mike seemed upset," El explained. "He kept 'saying what did I do wrong?' and then they said we are different species and we run on emotion, not logic."

"Shitheads," Max sighed. "They think they did nothing wrong, what about lying, their so stupid. What else?"

"Will got angry and said they should get over it and play D&D," El

said sadly. "Then they all started doing gross things."

"Like what?" Max grimaced.

"Burping and farting," El said cringing at the memory.

"God boys are gross," Max said then giggled.

"Even if it was gross it is so cool that you can spy on people that way," Max said. "How did you learn that?"

"Papa taught me how to find people in the void and spy on them," El explained. "I didn't mind because at least then he didn't want me to hurt people."

"Wow," Max said deep in thought.

The gang tried to explain to the best of their abilities what El's life had been like before Hawkins. It was very different hearing it from El herself.

"Hey I have an idea," Max said standing up. "Have you ever played spin the bottle?"

El nodded her head. She had seen it played once in a movie, people sat in a circle, spun the bottle and kissed whoever it landed on. El wasn't sure why Max would want to play that with just her.

"Let's play but instead of kissing, whoever we land on you can spy on them," Max explained with a devilish grin.

"Okay," El smiled.

The girls gathered the few supplies they needed as Max picked people they should spy on. They already spied on Lucas, Will, and Mike. She started with Dustin, then added Billy and Nancy and Steve. She thought some of the adults might be funny. She added Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler and Mr. Clark.

"Holy shit I can't believe we're really doing this," Max mused as she finished the game board. "Ready?"

"Ready," El agreed.

She picked up the empty bottle and spun it around. Once it stopped it landed on a familiar name.

"Mr. Wheeler," Both girls said in unison.

"Ugh boring," Max said.

"Yeah boring," El agreed. She had met Mr. Wheeler a few times and to be fair it probably would be pretty boring to spy on him.

"Spin again," Max offered.

El reached for the bottle then looked back at Max. "Against the rules?"

"We make our own rules," Max smirked.

El smiled, she really liked that idea. No one tell her what the rules are, she could make her own rules even if it was just for a silly game.

She picked up the bottle and spun it around again.

"Billy," The two girls said.

Max seemed unsure about the spin but then got up off the bed.

"Okay look," She started. "I should just warn you if he's with a girl or doing something gross just get out of there right away before you're scarred for life."

El listened as Max brought the radio over to her. She wondered what Billy could be doing that was so gross. Then again what she witnessed Mike and his friends doing was pretty gross too.

"Max," El tried to cut in.

"No, I'm just saying I'm serious he's really gross!" Max explained.

"Max!" El laughed.

"Shutting up now," Max giggled, and she fiddled with the radio.

El placed her blindfold on and got ready to see what strange things Billy was up to.

Max watched as her friend fell silent. She couldn't believe someone she knew had these types of powers. This time El didn't say anything to Max, but after a while, her breathing started to speed up. Max got slightly concerned but tried not to get too worried. After a few moments, she wondered if she should say something to bring El back from her trance. Before she could, El let out a gasp and took off her blindfold.

She looked at Max with wide eyes, the eyes of someone who just witnessed something bad. She shivered slightly and whipped the blood from her nose.

"What is it?" Max asked urgently. "What happened?"

El explained about the girl and Billy and the feeling she got when Billy looked at her.

"Has that happened before?" Max asked.

"No," El said trying to remember. "Not really, Mike sensed me once."

Her body felt exhausted probably from all her time in void today.

"Do you mind if we go to bed," El asked. "I'm pretty tired."

"No problem," Max agreed as both girls got ready.

Max could sense something was wrong with her friend but she decided not to push it tonight. Tomorrow they would talk and everything would get figured out.

The next morning

The girls got up early, unable to sleep and dressed quickly, Max brought El something of hers to wear. While she was packing for the sleepover she threw in an outfit she thought El might like to borrow, now that she knew what El's style was. El was touched by the offer and put on the outfit.

"Can we go back to your house?" El asked as they ate some cereal.

"Sure," Max said. "Why?"

"Check on Billy," El sighed.

She couldn't help but shake the feeling that something was very wrong. She knew that Max knew her brother better but El knew that what she saw wasn't…normal.

"Alright," Max said.

Max wasn't sure why El wouldn't let this go. Maybe it's because she didn't understand Billy and what "normal" was for him. If it made El feel better to go to the house and see for herself so be it.

The girls began their journey back to Max's place.

"It's gonna start pouring soon," Max observed looking at the sky. "We should be at the mall or watching a movie or something."

"You don't believe me?" El asked slightly hurt.

"I believe you saw some super weird stuff totally," Max reassured. "But you said Mike has sensed you in there before right? So maybe it was just like that. Maybe Billy just senses you somehow."

Max honestly did not know what El saw but she felt a strange need to defend her brother. Sure he could be a dick sometimes but he had a good side to him.

"But the screams," El cringed as she thought about the girl in the void.

El knew she couldn't get Max to understand without proof. The only person who would take her at her word without question would be Mike. El wished he was here right now.

"I know, but here's the thing," Max sighed trying to figure out how to explain this to El. "When Billy is alone with a girl they make like….really crazy noises."

"They scream?" El asked.

"Yeah, but like…happy screams," Max tried to clarify.

"Happy screams?!" El mused. "What is happy screams?"

"It's like…ugh," Max struggled to explain, she really did want El to understand what she meant. "I'm just gonna lend you my mom's cosmo."

El had no idea what that meant but the thought was soon pushed aside as they arrived at Max's house.

"His cars not here," Max observed but remained unfazed by the statement.

She looked over at El who seemed concerned as she stared at the house. El remembered seeing Billy's car all smashed, maybe she was right after all.

"You really want to do this?" Max checked.

El simply nodded her head, determined to find proof. The girls searched the room and came up with nothing out of the ordinary. When they went in the bathroom El saw the tub filled with empty ice bags.

She could feel her hairs stand on end, she was getting a strange sense of déjà vu.

"Max," She said as her friend followed her.

"Ice," Max said simply. "It's just ice. It's probably just for his muscles or something he works out like a maniac."

El wasn't so sure, but she had to keep looking for something Max couldn't brush off with an explanation.

El turned her head feeling that something was wrong. She scanned the white cabinets to see a few red splotches. She opened the cabinet to find a small trash bin.

"El what is it?" Max asked confused.

She figured some pretty gross stuff might be in that trash can and some of it she wasn't prepared to explain to El.

El slowly lifted a lifeguard FannyPack, Max observed this and realized it wasn't Billy's. She watched as El continued to pull out a whistle. It wasn't until El turned around that Max could see it was covered in blood.

"Now do you believe me?" El asked.

Max just nodded, her mind reeling with questions.

While the boys are playing D&D

"Do you guys hear that?" Will asked. "It sounds like thunder, but no wait…that's not thunder its ….a hoard of juju zombies!"

Will was glad that his friends finally came around to playing D&D. Sure he had to pester them a bit and Dustin wasn't here but it was okay.

"Sir Mike your action?" Will asked.

"What should I do?" Mike asked Lucas.

Mike actually didn't mind playing D&D but his mind was wandering to El. What was she doing right now? Why hasn't he heard from her?

"Attack?" Lucas asked sounding rather bored. Will rolled his eyes, ever since Lucas got a girlfriend he acts like he's so cool.

"Okay I attack with my flail," Mike says as he rolls the dice.

Whoosh! You miss," Will smirks. "Your flail clanks the stone, the zombie hoard lumbers towards you and…the juju bites your arm…..flesh tears! AHHH… 7 points of damage."

"Ohh no my arm." Mike teased. "Lucas look my arm."

Mike and the rest of the guys always teased each other during D&D

so he was surprised to see Will being put off by it. Will again shrugged it off as Mike trying to be as cool as Lucas.

"Sir Lucas," Will said bringing the boys back to the game "The zombie hoard roars…do you fight back or do you run?"

Will didn't appreciate the smug look Lucas was giving him as he asked his question. He wanted to lean forward and slap him. Lucas opens his mouth to answer when the phone rang.

"No! It's a distraction! A trap! Do not answer it!" Will yelled in desperation.

With no luck, both boys ran to the phone.

"El?!" Mike answered quickly "No sorry not interested… telemarketers"

"Maybe we should just call them," Lucas said at a loss.

"We can do that?" Mike said confused

"I think so," Lucas responded unsurely.

"Yeah, but what would we say?" Mike questioned out loud.

"We'll say nothing!" Will jumped in. "The couazar tribe still needs our help."

Mike felt bad for Will, he honestly did. Mike realized they haven't played D&D in forever, but now wasn't the time. He wanted to play and have fun but he had to fix his mistakes with El first and Will just didn't understand that.

"Alright then I'll use my torch to set fire to the chamber," Mike said trying to finish the game. "Sacrificing ourselves, killing the jujus and saving the couazar. We all live on as heroes in the memory of the calamar."

"Victory," Lucas agreed as he high fived Mike.

"Fine," Will said giving up and throwing down his stick. "You guys

win, congratulations."

Will couldn't stand listening to these two go on any longer. He needed to leave. He began taking off his costume and gathering his things.

"Will I was just messing around," Mike explained. "Let's finish for real. How much longer is the campa-"

"Just forget it, Mike!" Will said sharply.

Mike was taken aback, Will never got this upset over teasing. He feared he crossed a line, or rather something was wrong with Will.

"No, we want to keep playing right?" Mike looked at Lucas for help.

"Yeah totally," Lucas said but with far less enthusiasm.

"We'll just call the girls after," Mike said trying to please both his friends.

"I SAID FORGET IT MIKE OKAY?" Will yelled. "I'm going home,"

Mike couldn't believe what was happening, he had never seen Will act this way. Will was always the level headed, quiet one in the party.

"What? Come on Will," Lucas sighed trying to block Will's escape.

"Move!" Will yelled as he pushed Lucas out of the way.

Mike followed after Will up the stairs.

"Will come on you can't leave its raining," He said finding Will in the garage. "I said I was sorry alright? It's a cool campaign it's really cool. We're just not in the mood right now."

"Yeah, Mike that's the problem! You guys are never in the mood anymore. You're running our party." Will said letting out all his frustrations.

"That's not true," Mike said getting defensive.

Why was he getting the blame for everything? What did he do?

"Really?! Where's Dustin right now?" Will shot back.

Mike looked around trying to remember when the last time he spoke to Dustin was. He felt bad that he couldn't remember but Dustin has also been gone for over a month. Mike didn't forget about him because he doesn't like him, but because he forgets his home from camp. When Dustin first left for camp the party called him all the time then remembered he wasn't home. It just took time to remember.

"See you don't know and you don't even care and obviously he doesn't either and I don't blame him!" Will yelled at Mike as tears welled up in his eyes. "You're destroying everything! And for what? So you could swap spit with some stupid girl?"

"El's not stupid!" Mike said angrily.

Will hasn't gotten to know El very well. Whenever she was around he was in the upside-down/being flayed…etc. But Will knows how much El means to Mike. Mike knew that Will was just frustrated but there was no reason to bring El into this.

"It's not my fault you don't like girls," Mike spat out before registering what he said.

Will looked as if Mike had slapped him in the face. What Mike had meant to say was "you don't like girls…yet" He knew Will has constantly heard from all the bullies at school and even his Dad that he was gay. It was a hurtful comment that Mike never meant to say. The fact that it could be taken that way, torn Mike up inside.

"I'm not trying to be a jerk okay?" Mike said softening. "But we're not kids anymore. I mean what did you think really? That we were never gonna get girlfriends, that we were just gonna sit in my basement all day and play games for the rest of our lives?"

"Yeah," Will said as tears began to fall. "I guess I did, I really did."

And with that Will rode off on his bike into the rain.

"Will…..Will," Mike said in desperation. "Will come on!"

I hope you enjoyed this chapter. Feel free to make suggestions for missing moments, I love reading them. Please review! Thanks!

4. Episode 4: The sauna test

Hello! Welcome back to another chapter. The last chapter didn't get as many reviews as I hoped, so if you enjoyed let me know! It keeps me writing and I love hearing from you all. Enjoy chapter 4.

When the girls got back from Heathers, they were soaking wet. They decided to each take a hot shower and get ready for bed.

The rain was pounding against the side of the house, the thunder cracked every few moments. El was happy that she wasn't alone in the cabin tonight. She brushed her teeth as her mind wandered back to Billy. The look, the blood, Heather in the void…none of it made sense.

She continued to think when she went back into Max's bedroom and got into bed with her.

"Which one?" Max asked as she held up two comic books.

"I don't know," El answered honestly.

She had read a few different comic books with Mike. She really liked the x-men because she felt like she could relate to them. Remember the times she and Mike spent on her bed as they took turns reading out loud made her miss him even more.

Max saw the expression on her friend's face, she looked deep in thought. She put down the comics and tried to be reassuring.

"Hey, there's nothing to worry about anymore okay?" She said gently.

"Doesn't make sense," El said as her mind went a mile a minute.

"What doesn't make sense?" Max asked

"Heather," El said slowly. "The blood, the ice."

"Heather had a fever, so she took a cold bath but she's better now," Max stated confidently. "That has to be it. I don't know where that

blood came from, but we saw her…we both saw her, she's totally fine."

Max wished her friend would drop this whole mystery, they were supposed to be having fun. She knew that the things they found today were weird, and El saw some weird things in the void but they could all be explained. That had to be what happened….it had to.

"What about Billy?" El asked after a moment.

"What about him?" Max asked confused.

"He seemed wrong," El explained.

She had seen that look somewhere before and it was bothering her so much that she couldn't remember where. All she knew for sure was it wasn't good.

"Wrong is kinda like his default," Max smirked. "But it's nice to know he's not a murderer because that would have totally sucked."

Max tried to laugh it off, there was nothing "dangerous" about her brother other than his driving habits at times. El tried to laugh it off as well but couldn't help but shake the feeling.

"Who is that?" She asked looking at one of the comic books with a woman on the cover.

"See this is why you can't just hang out with Mike all the time," Max teased. "This is Wonder Woman, aka Princess Diana. She's from paradise island which is like this hidden island with only woman amazon warriors."

El enjoyed learning about Wonder Woman, Max even read the first comic with her. They were brought out of the fantasy world by a loud crack on thunder. El jumped at the sound.

"Pretty bad storm," Max observed. "Are you scared of thunder?"

El just nodded her head, slightly embarrassed. She thought back to the first night at Mike's place and how she cried herself to sleep as it thundered outside.

"What are you thinking about?" Max asked curiously.

"Did Lucas ever tell you how we met?" El questioned.

"Kind of," Max mused. "A short version I suppose."

"It was a night like this," El said looking towards the window. "They were looking for Will and I was running from Papa. They found me in the woods. Mike gave me his coat and took me home."

Max listened intently as El recounted her story. She had never heard El tell the story before. She stayed silent as El continued, getting lost in her memories.

"Dustin and Lucas thought they should tell someone, send me away," El explained with a small smile. "But Mike wouldn't let them. He gave me clothes and let me sleep in the basement."

"Why didn't you want them to tell Mike's parents?" Max questioned.

"I was scared," El said. "I met someone before who helped me but he called for help and instead the bad men came and killed him."

El remembered the kindness the Benny showed her, it was the first time she experienced that in her life.

"I couldn't let that happen to Mike and his friends," El said shaking her head at the thought. "Mike took care of me. He made me feel like a person for the first time. He was so sweet and patient and gentle. Even when they found out I had powers; Mike never pushed me to use them."

El thought back to when Dustin tried to get her to use her powers on command and Mike chastised him for treating El like a dog.

"Papa wasn't like that," El grimaced. "He would make me use my powers for terrible things, things I didn't want to do but he'd make me."

Max felt sad listening to her friend tell her story. Max knew from the way Mike talked when they first met that he and El meant a lot to each other. She didn't realize that Mike was one of the first few

people to ever show kindness to El, who had a rough life. Suddenly El's regret and feelings after dumping Mike made more sense. Max still didn't think Mike was being kind by lying but she understood why El was having a hard time letting go.

"Well I'm glad you have all of us now," Max said placing her hand on El's. "And Hopper he is a grumpy man but he's good to you."

"Yes," El smiled. "We both have a temper, but we take care of each other."

"I'm glad," Max smiled. "Should we head to bed? It's getting late."

El nodded and rolled over as Max turned off the light.

"Night Max," El whispered.

"Goodnight El," Max smiled as she laid down.

The next morning

It was early…. too early for the girls to be getting up. Max couldn't hear a familiar voice lulling her from her sleep.

"Do you copy? This is a code red! Max! Max do you copy! This is a code red!" The supercom sounded from the floor.

Both girls stirred awake at the sound of Lucas's voice.

"What the…." Max sighed as she rolled over to grab the device from the floor. "Shut up!"

She turned off the supercom swiftly and rolled back onto her side.

El rubbed her eyes wondering what was happening. "Everything okay?"

"Yeah," Max said with her eyes still closed. "Just those idiots."

"But…." El said cautiously. "They said it was a code red….that means bad."

"Their definition of a code red and my definition of a code red are

very different." Max sighed.

El understood what Max meant but couldn't help but feel like this was related to her bad feeling. She laid her head back on the pillow.

Back at Mikes place, the boys were all on the couch dumbfounded.

"She turned it off," Lucas said slowly.

"Hold on," Mike said running over to the telephone and dialing Max's number.

When she heard her phone start to ring Max couldn't believe her ears. Would Lucas stop at nothing?!

"Oh, you've got to be kidding me!" She said getting up from the bed to answer the phone.

El laid in bed listening closely to what was happening.

"I'm sleeping go away!" Max said before attempting to hang up the phone.

This time she heard a different voice through the phone. "It's Mike, DO NOT hang up." Max was taken aback and did not hang up the phone. She thought this was a ploy to get El back and she rolled her eyes.

"Something happened, something bad," Mike said quickly. "Our very lives could be at stake."

"What are you talking about?" Max asked.

She realized from the way he was talking this was bigger than Mike and El's relationship. There was some kind of real problem. She had a flashback to when the boys would talk about the upside-down, El and the gate and how it was always life or death. Her blood ran cold for a second and she shivered.

"Just come over to my house," Mike explained. "We'll explain everything."

El perked her head up at the vague sound of Mike's voice on the other end of the phone.

"What?" Max asked again.

"Hurry!" Mike said before hanging up the phone.

El became anxious since she could only really hear Max's side of the conversation, what on earth was going on?

"What did he say?" El asked as Max just stared at the phone receiver.

"Something happened," Max said slowly with her brow furrowed. "They want us to come over."

El's heart started pounding, she knew as soon as she saw Billy in the void something was wrong. She jumped out of bed and began searching for something to wear.

"Here," Max said reaching into her closet and pulling out something she thought El might like.

"Thanks," El smiled gratefully as she ran into the bathroom to change.

She quickly threw her hair into a half ponytail (like she had seen other girls do), got dressed and brushed her teeth. When she appeared from the bathroom Max had already changed.

"Ready?" She asked.

"Yes," El replied as they ran out the door.

"It will be faster if we bike," Max said hopping onto her bike.

"I don' have a bike," El said.

"It's okay you can get on the back of mine," Max said simply.

El stood on the back part of Max's wheel and placed her hands on her shoulders. It gave El a pang of emotion, reminding her of when Mike used to do this with her on his bike. Max peddled quickly as she rode over to Mikes house.

They knocked on the front door and Lucas answered immediately, he must have been waiting for them El thought.

"Hey," Lucas said awkwardly.

"This better be good stalker," Max said moving past him with El in tow behind her.

They all traveled the familiar path down to the basement. When they descended the stairs, they saw Will and Mike sitting on the couch talking.

"What's the big deal?" Max asked.

"Sit down," Lucas sighed. "Will can explain."

El and Mike locked eyes as she walked down the stairs. Neither of them knew what to say, but they both felt the same way. They did not like the awkwardness between them, they wanted things to be back to normal. The problem was neither of them were sure the other person felt the same.

The group sat around the coffee table and looked to Will for an explanation.

"Go on Will," Mike prompted. "Tell them what you told us."

"I've been having these weird feelings," Will began. "I didn't think it was anything at first. I mean I think I just didn't wanna believe it. The first time I felt it was at Day of the Dead."

"The power went out that night too," Mike interjected.

"And then I felt it again at the field near the Nelson farm the next day," Will continued. "Then again yesterday outside castle Byers."

"What does it feel like?" Max asked.

"It's almost like…." Will started as he struggled to find words. "You know when you drop on a roller coaster?"

"Sure," Mike replied.

"Yeah," Max agreed.

"No," El said trying to relate to the conversation.

"It's like everything inside your body is just sinking all at once," Will said trying to describe the feeling to El. "But this is worse. Your body… it goes cold and you can't breathe."

El listened to Will intently as he explained his bad feelings. Her heart started pounding faster as she began to realize what he was describing.

"I felt it before," Will said. "Whenever he was close."

"Whenever who was close?" Max asked.

El braced herself for the answer she already knew was coming. She closed her eyes and heard Will continue.

"The mind flayer," He said softly.

"I closed the gate," El said confidently.

She knew what she accomplished that day, she saw it close. Everything had gone back to normal.

"I know but," Will said trying to make sense of it all. "What if he never left? What if we locked him out here with us?"

Will turned to El and searched for the possibility in her eyes. El wasn't sure exactly what he meant. Will saw the confusion and got up quickly.

"Here," he said grabbing a piece of paper and a crayon off the desk in the corner. He brought the paper down onto the table so all his friends could see it.

"This is him, all of him," Will said drawing the mind flayer. "But that day on the field a part of him attached itself to me,"

Will smoothed his hand across the paper so black crayon was on his hand. He held it up so everyone could see.

"My mom got it out of me and Eleven closed the gate," Will explained. "But the part that was in me, what if it's still in our world? In Hawkins?"

He flipped the paper over and placed his hand in the center, leaving a handprint.

El wanted to scream, this could be a strong possibility. She thought she had done the right thing by closing the gate, now she's learning she locked part of this monster in Hawkins endangering her friends.

"I don't understand the demadogs died when El closed the gate," Max said trying to wrap her head around the situation. "If the brain dies the body dies."

"We can't take any chances," Mike spoke up. "We need to assume the worst. The mind flayer is back."

"Yeah and if he is, he would want to attach himself to someone again," Will said. "A new me."

"A new host," Lucas said.

El and Max locked eyes they were both thinking the same thing. Does this have anything to do with the strange things we witnessed?

"How do you know if someone is a host?" El asked.

Everyone turned towards El, she looked at her friends all wearing matching confused expressions.

"What's going on?" Mike asked as he observed how Max and El were acting.

"I had a…bad feeling too," El said slowly.

Will leaned forward with intrigue and Mike because afraid for the girl he cared so much about.

"What kind of feeling?" Will asked.

"About Billy," She began. "Somethings not right."

"But we checked on him," Max interjected. "Everything's fine."

"Just let El tell us what she saw," Mike said to the redhead.

"I saw Billy in the void, and he seemed off," El restarted. "So we went to Max's house and found an ice bath, heathers whistle, and blood."

The kids all felt a shiver go down their spine at the mention of the blood.

"We back into the void and saw Heather, the lifeguard at the pool, she was in the bath and asked me for help," El said grimacing at the memory.

Mike could tell that whatever El saw was bothering her. He wanted to reach for her hand in support but wasn't sure if this was the right time.

"We went to the pool to check on Billy and Heather and they didn't show up for work," El continued. "So we went to Heather's house and they were both there, fine."

"So where did the blood come from?" Lucas asked.

"And what was the ice for?" Mike asked.

"And why was heather asking for help?" Will wondered.

"We don't know!" Max yelled.

"I just know somethings wrong," El said. "Billy seems wrong."

Mike saw Max sigh and roll her eyes at this statement, suddenly he became enraged.

"What?" Mike asked curtly. "You don't believe her?"

"He's my brother," Max said simply. "I don't know what to believe."

"The ice bath could be to keep his body temperature down," Will said trying to bring the group back to the topic at hand. "The mind flayer likes it cold."

"He's taken ice baths before," Max defended.

"Okay so Billy is acting weird right when we think the Mindflayer is back," Lucas said. "How can we know for sure?"

"Let's go watch him," Mike said. "Maybe we will find a clue or come up with a better plan."

"Where is he?" Will asked.

"Probably working at the pool," Max explained.

"Let's go," Lucas said running up the stairs as the rest of the group followed.

They all rode their bikes, El on the back of Max's bike, to the pool. Once they were there they placed themselves behind a car in the parking lot.

Max watched Billy through the binoculars that Lucas brought with him.

"I don't know," She said. "He looks pretty normal to me."

Part of her knew this wasn't true but a bigger part of her knew that her brother couldn't be the host. And she didn't want him to be.

"Normal?" Lucas disagreed. "How many times have you seen him with a shirt on?"

"I mean it's a little weird," Max agreed.

"More than a little," Mike argued. "He was in a tub with ice, the mind flayer likes it cold. Plus everything El saw."

"But he's lounging at the pool," Max stammered. "Which is like the least mind flayer thing ever."

"Not necessarily," Will added. "The mind flayer likes to hide. He only used me when he needed me. It's like your dormant. And then when he needs you, your activated."

"Okay so we just wait until he gets activated," Max said.

'No," Mike continued. "What if he hurts someone?"

"Or kills someone," Will added.

"We can't take that chance," Mike stated. "We need to find out if he's the host."

Mike began walking away when El called after him.

"Where are you going?" She wondered.

"I have an idea," He said gesturing to Will and Lucas to follow. "Boys only."

"Seriously?" Max asked not believing him.

"Just trust me on this one," Mike said trying to convince the girls.

"Unbelievable," Max grumbled.

"What do you think they're doing?" El wondered as she watched the boys leave.

"What they always do," Max said angrily. "Do everything themselves and leave us behind."

El furrowed her brow, she didn't think that was true.

"What do you mean?" El asked.

"When I first started hanging out with them, they used to leave me out of important stuff all the time," Max explained. "Now they're doing it again."

"Why?"

"Because we're girls," Max sighed. "They think we can't help, a different species remember?"

El didn't like that idea. She was able to do more than all the boys combined.

"Also," Max said with a laugh. "Rich that Mike just said the words 'trust me on this one' after he lied to your face the other day."

El could feel herself getting angrier as Max continued.

Suddenly the boys came back into view heading towards them.

"Okay here's the plan," Mike started.

Max rolled her eyes and gave El a look. Both of them looked displeased but he had no idea why.

"We wait until the pool closes and were alone with Billy, while he's in the locker room we lure him into the sauna and lock him inside," Mike explained.

"Then we turn it up really hot," Will added. "The mind flayer likes it cold so the heat should bring him out."

"Okay," Max said. "So now what?"

"We need to find supplies to lure Billy into the sauna and something to keep the door closed," Lucas explained.

"Okay," the girls nodded.

"Cool," Mike said unsure of where they attitude was coming from. "Will you and Lucas go into the back room. El you can look in the locked shed, I'll look in the change room."

"What about me?" Max asked in a monotone voice.

"You stay here and watch Billy," Mike said. "Make sure he doesn't become activated."

"Of course," Max said under her breath so only El could hear.

El rolled her eyes similar to Max. Maybe they didn't think she could help them. Maybe they were only letting El look so she could unlock doors with her powers.

Everyone disbursed quickly to their designated spot to search.

El quickly unlocked the storage shed and began to look around. There must be something in here we can use she thought to herself. Suddenly her eyes fell on a plastic fake person. This could work as a distraction, she picked it up when she heard Mike walk in behind her.

"Hey I found the breakers," He said. "Wow that thing is super creepy, let me see it."

He took the doll from El's grasp and put it next to himself. El looked at him unimpressed.

"I think this will work, right buddy?" Mike asked then moved the doll's mouth. "Right Mike."

Mike looked over at El and smiled. He was hoping to make her laugh with no such luck. She was giving him an unamused look.

She took the doll without a word, threw it over her shoulder and began to leave the shed.

"Hey El," Mike said trying to get her to stay.

He decided that enough was enough if he was going to get in trouble with Hopper so be it. He needed to tell El the truth so she wouldn't be mad at him anymore. It was driving him crazy.

She turned and looked back at him, waiting for him to speak.

"I just wanted to say…" Mike began. "You know when I said Nana was sick? She wasn't, I lied."

That's the confession? El thought to herself. How did he not realize she already caught him in this lie.

"I know," She said turning to leave again.

"Right right right," Mike said trying not to lose her. "Well, I just think it's important for you to know the context. Hopper, he went all crazy on me, telling me I'm spending way too much time with you. He made me lie. I mean you're the most important thing to me in the world."

El couldn't believe what she was hearing. She had no idea Hop would do something like that. Then her mind wandered back to her conversations with Max the past few days. She tossed the doll on the floor.

"What if he's right?" El said getting frustrated.

"What?" Mike asked.

This is not where he thought this conversation would go. He figured he would tell the truth, she would be sorry then things could go back to normal.

"Hop," El said simply.

"No no no no," Mike explained. "He's just some angry old man who hates joy."

"But if I only see you," El said poking Mikes shoulder. "And I'm a different species then you, then I should be with my species more."

"What are you talking about?" Mike asked.

He had never heard Eleven talk about species. He had no idea where she got these ideas from. Did she even know what a species was? No one even uses that word except when….oh no. It dawned on Mike suddenly that his now ex-girlfriend can spy on him in the void.

"Did you spy on me!?" Mike asked.

El leaned over and picked up the doll again. She didn't say a word which Mike took as a yes, this explains everything. He wondered exactly how much of the conversation she heard. He turned a little red in the face.

"That's totally against the rules!" Mike continued.

"I make my own rules," El said as she left the shed.

Mikes mind was going a mile a minute. What on earth has Max been teaching El, she was corrupting her.

"Mike are you here?" Max's voice sounded from the supercom.

It took all Mikes power not to yell at her over the walkie talkie.

"Yeah!" Mike yelled.

"Where are you guys?" Max said confused by his tone.

"I'm coming just hold on a second," Mike said quickly. "Shit."

Max shrugged off Mikes strange tone of voice and continued to watch her brother. Billy had given her a hard time before, but he was still her brother, she wanted to protect him the way he used to protect her. They were family after all.

"God I hope it's not you," She said to herself. "I really hope it's not you."

Once the pool is closed

Right before the pool closed the kids hid themselves in the locker room. They were able to remain unseen even when Billy came in to make sure everyone was out. While he was in the office finishing the paperwork for the day, they set their plan in motion. Placing the dummy, the supercom and reviewing their parts to play.

When Billy entered the locker room he went into the shower. The kids came out of their respective hiding spots and all went into the back storage area. It was the farthest away from the showers

They heard Billy go into the locker room and take out his clothes. It was time for the plan to begin.

Mike nodded to El as she closed her eyes and made the door of the locker room open, close and lock from the outside so Billy couldn't leave.

"Pools closed," They heard Billy say. "Hey, did you hear me! The pool is closed."

They heard him bang on the door a few times trying to get it open.

"Now Mike," Lucas whispered.

"Billy," Mike said into the supercom.

"Who's there?" They heard Billy's faint voice ask.

"Biiillllllyyy," Mike said in a teasing voice.

El made a few of the lockers bang to try and get more of Billy's attention.

"Who's there?" Billy said back in an angrier version on the sing-song voice.

"Billy! Billy," Mike continued.

"You think this is funny huh?" Billy said.

"Ha hahaha," Mike laughed in response to Billy's question. "Billy come and find me."

"I find you," Billy said sternly. "It is your funeral."

Lucas, Max, and Will all stayed behind, anxiously waiting to leap into action. Max prayed that nothing went wrong, that Billy didn't accidentally walk past the sauna to find them in the storage area.

"Come and get me," Mike taunted. "Come on,"

El open and closed the door to the locker room, leading Billy in the direction they wanted him to go.

"Billy," Mike called then began to laugh.

"Got you," They heard Billy say then he laughed a crazy laugh.

Lucas peaked his head out to see Billy indeed going for the sauna. He gave the group a thumbs up.

"Go El," Mike whispered touching her arm to get her out of her trance.

El walked away from the rest of the group coming up behind Billy as

he entered the sauna. He looked at the doll curiously, picked it up by the throat and raised it to the ceiling.

"Hey behind you," Mike's voice came from the supercom.

Billy turned around to see El standing in the doorway.

"Hi," She said casually.

Billy prepared to charge but El was quicker, using her powers to throw him into the wall of the sauna.

Mike watched as El did her part of the plan, now was their cue.

"Now!" He yelled turning on the lights as the gang ran to the sauna door. El closed it with the swipe of her hand. The rest of them put in the pipe and locked the chains around the handle.

"Got it!" Lucas said when the padlock was secure.

They all ran back behind El, a safe distance from the sauna door. Billy was still pounding trying to get out. He stopped to finally look at the scene in front of him, his eyes locked on his sister.

"Max," he said slowly. He almost looked like he was calming down.

They all turned to look at Max, wondering if she would call off the plan.

"Do it," She said quickly. She needed to know once and for all if her brother was the host.

Will ran forward and turned on the controls to make it as hot as possible.

As they waited Billy began to talk to them

"You kids think this is funny?" He began breathing heavily. "You kids think this is some kind of sick prank huh?"

Everyone looked at each other, all wondering if maybe he wasn't the host, after all, maybe he was just angry.

"You little shits think this is funny?" He yelled. "What is it? Open the door. OPEN THE DOOR! OPEN THE GODDAMN DOOR!"

As he went out of view Will went over to check the heat.

"We're at 220," He said heading back to the group.

They all got an uneasy feeling as the sauna went quiet. They began to hear whimpering and crying noises.

"It's not my fault," Billy said in a quiet voice. "It's not my fault Max it's not my fault."

Max felt her heart sink as she took a few steps closer to see inside the sauna.

She saw her brother sitting on the floor crying. She had never seen this kind of vulnerability from him and it made her heartbreak.

"What's not your fault Billy?" Max whispered and she came to the window.

"I've done things, Max," He cried. "Bad things, I didn't mean to. He made me do it."

"Who made you do it?" Max asked.

"It's like a shadow," Billy tried to explain. "Like a giant shadow. Please, Max."

El turned to look at Will, she felt bad for Billy in this moment. She knew he didn't want to do any of these things, he was being controlled. Will locked eyes with El, they knew for sure now. Billy was the new host.

Will's heart sank, he knew exactly what it felt like to be controlled, to hurt people because the mind flayer made you do it. He really wanted to help Billy but he didn't know how just yet.

"What did he make you do?" Max asked.

"It's NOT MY FAULT!" Billy screamed turning over to his side. "MAX

PLEASE…..please, please, believe me, Max, please."

Max began to cry. She didn't want her brother to suffer the way Will did. The mind flayer is making him do terrible things that even he feels bad about. He's right, it's not his fault.

"I tried to stop him I did," Billy cried. "Please, believe me, Max."

"It's gonna be okay," Max said through her tears. "It's gonna be okay we want to help you. You just have to talk to us okay? You have to talk to us."

Will watched with a heavy heart as his friend tried to reason with both her brother and the mind flayer inside him. Suddenly he started to feel the hairs on his neck stand up. This is not good.

"I feel him," Will whispered to Mike.

Mike looked over at Will and tried to predict what would happen next. If Will could feel the mind flayer, he's in control of Billy. Billy isn't himself right now, the mind flayer is trying to get to Max.

"He's activated," Will said with wide eyes.

"Max get away from the door," Mike said calmly.

"What?" Max asked without turning around.

"GET AWAY FROM THE DOOR!" Mike yelled as Billy busted through the window.

Max screamed and jumped out of the way just in time.

El instructively put her arms up, trying to keep her friends behind her.

"LET ME OUT!" Billy said banging on the door. "LET ME OUT LET ME OUT!"

He pulled the bar our of the handle and the group began to get nervous, he could possibly escape and kill them all.

Lucas took out his wrist rocket and hit Billy square in the forehead. Billy fell back against the floor hard.

"Max come on!" Lucas yelled at her to join them.

Stunned but able to move, Max moved over behind Lucas.

Suddenly the lights began to flicker crazily. The group looked up, wondering what that meant and what would happen next.

Billy began to make strange noises from inside the sauna. Billy was being activated even more. He began to scream inhumanly. His veins started popping out and he began to ram the door with more strength than ever.

"He can't get out can he?" Max wondered.

"No way," Lucas said but as he watched Billy he no longer believed his own words. "No way!"

Suddenly the door burst open and Billy came tumbling out in front of them.

El immediately began to concentrate on Billy's movements, she had to protect her friends. Everyone stood behind El frozen with fear. Now that they knew Billy was the host there was no telling what he would do. They were all grateful that El was there, she had stopped the mind flayer before.

Billy stared down at El with cold, lifeless eyes. She took a deep breath and slowly lifted one of the weights with her powers. Quickly she let out a scream and threw it at Billy, sending him flying into the wall.

Everyone jumped as they watched El use her strength to pin Billy against the wall. Mike watched in awe, he couldn't believe this much power was coming from a small girl like El.

Billy struggled against El's powers, he was being lifted off the ground. His veins began expanding, even more, the mind flayer becoming agitated.

Slowly Billy began to push the weights off his neck.

How is this possible? El thought to herself, she began to scream, trying to push all of her power to keep Billy pined. Suddenly she was sent to the ground by Billy throwing the weights back at her.

Mike almost had a heart attack, thinking El got hit by the weight, after seeing her on the floor he could tell that wasn't the case.

El tried to crawl away from Billy, to get herself in the headspace to try again. Then she felt him grab her hair. He brought her up onto her feet.

Billy looked Max and Lucas dead in the eyes for a moment. Max did not see her brother at that moment, it was a monster. Without batting an eye Billy took his free hand and clasped it around EL's neck.

Mike jumped slightly, taken aback by Billy's actions. He began scanning the room. What on earth could he use? Max, Lucas and Will looked on helplessly. They had no idea how to help their poor friends.

El sputtered for air, slapping Billy with her free hand trying to break free. She coughed and choked trying to get any air. She was losing strength, so her powers weren't working. She could feel Billy lifting her high above. She gripped his hand with both of her to save herself. She refused to let the mind flayer win, she had to keep fighting back.

With Billy's attention fully turned to El, Mike saw his opportunity to creep over and grab one of the metal rods for weightlifting. His heart broke as he came up behind Billy, watching El gasp for air.

In one quick motion, he hit Billy on the back on the head, sending him and El falling to the ground.

"Go to hell you pieced of shit!" He yelled as he swung to hit Billy again.

Mike used all his anger to bring the rod down onto Billy but he grabbed it too quickly and threw it behind him. Mike knew he was in trouble but at least he saved El, he didn't care what happened to himself now. Billy walked closer, backing Mike up to the wall, his

breathing becoming panicked.

El caught her breath from her spot on the ground. Her vision was going a little blurry but she could make out Billy walking towards Mike. She was exhausted but she knew she had to save Mike.

Mike watched with wide eyes as Billy began to levitate. He thought at first it might be Billy's doing. Then he heard EL groan from her spot on the floor, she was on her knees, arms outstretched towards Billy.

El pulled strength from her love for Mike. She got to her feet and moved so she was between Billy and Mike. Billy sputtered and yelled as he tried to break free from El's powers.

You've caused enough trouble, El thought to herself. With her last burst of energy El screamed as she tossed Billy through the brick wall.

Will, Lucas, and Max stared at the hole in the wall, chests heaving with their ragged breath.

El felt all her energy drain from her body, she began to fall, letting her tears run down her cheeks. Mike felt El's body press against his, he grabbed hold and slid down the wall to a sitting position with her.

"You're okay?" El cried as she brought her hand up to Mike's face behind her.

"I'm okay," He whispered frantically into her ear as he held her tight. "Everyone's okay, you saved us El."

He had to repeat "everything's okay," a few times both for himself and El.

"I'm gonna get you up okay?" He whispered once he remembered the hole in the wall.

He got to his feet quickly and moved so he was in front of El. She put her arms out for him and he helped her up.

They walked towards the wall with their friends, watching as Billy

got up and jogged to the woods.

El furrowed her brow as she watched Billy leave. She knew this wasn't going to be easy, but she couldn't let the mind flayer win. Billy would come back, and when he did, she would be ready.

The group watched for a little while, then Max turned to El and took her hand.

"You were amazing," She said softly. "Are you okay?"

"Yes," El said then winced. Her throat felt raw and it hurt to speak.

"Ugh guys maybe we should go," Lucas said staring at the giant hole in the wall.

"Yeah," Mike said leading the group. "Let's go back to my place."

I'm sorry that I ended it here, don't worry the aftermath of the fight will be the first thing at the start of the next chapter. I hope you all enjoyed, let me know in a review. If there are any missing moments you are dying to see please let me know!

5. Episode 5: The flayed

Episode 5

I am so sorry I've made you wait this long for this chapter. I went back to work and things got CRAZY. My apologizes once again, I hope you enjoy.

After the battle with Billy the group made their way over to their bikes.

"You sure you're okay?" Mike asked touching El's arm.

The feeling of his hand on her made her smile a bit.

"Yes," She said with a nod. Mike didn't fully believe it but continued to let her climb onto Max's bike.

As the gang headed back to Mikes house Mike couldn't take his eyes off El. She clung to the back of Max's bike trying not to fall over from exhaustion. He found himself constantly in awe of the bravery and power El possessed. She saved him, she saved all of them, just like she had done many times before. She was the most selfless person he knew. For the first time since their fight it felt like things were back to normal, strange since the most abnormal things were happening.

They snuck down to Mikes basement, it was late, really late. Thankfully Mikes parents don't keep close tabs on their children.

"So now what?" Lucas said as they all sat down on the couches.

"We need to figure out what to do next," Will said. "The mind flayer is back, how are we gonna get rid of it?"

"And how do we get Billy unflayed?" Max added.

As the group chattered away Mike could see that El was drained. She was at the far edge of the couch, her eyelids drooping.

"It's late," Mike said suddenly, cutting off his friends.

"What?" Lucas looked over as if his friend was insane.

"It's been a long night," Mike began slowly. "We will come up with a better plan if we get some rest. We can wake up early and try to figure out a plan."

"I don't know-" Will began to object.

Mike tilted his head in El's direction, and everyone slowly turned to look at their exhausted friend. She didn't even notice the stares she was so out of it.

"She's gotta re-charge," Mike whispered to his friends.

"Okay," Max agreed scooting closer to El and patting her arm.

El's eye shot open in an effort to look wide awake. She hoped she didn't miss anything important.

"We're going to get some rest," Max said softly.

"I'll get the extra pillows, blankets and sleeping bags," Mike said.

He and Lucas quickly gathered the supplies around the house quietly. When they came back down they got everyone situated with something to sleep on.

Lucas took the couch, Will put the two chairs together as a makeshift bed, while Max, Mike and El slept on the floor in sleeping bags. El was so tired when she got into her sleeping bag she began to fall asleep instantly. Before she could she looked around the room, she was sleeping right where the old fort used to be. Her mind drifted back to when she was hiding in Mikes basement. What El didn't know was that Mike wasn't asleep yet and he was thinking the exact same thing.

As he laid in the sleeping bad, unable to get the vision on El being choked by Billy out of his mind, Mike looked over at El. Max was between them but he looked passed her to see the sleeping brunette. She was exhausted and fell asleep quickly, her breathing shallow and rhythmic. He thought about her first night in the basement, how she was so scared and she slept in the fort. He smiled at just how much

she had grown and learned over the years since then.

He closed his eyes and promised himself he would make things right soon, El was too important to give up.

The next morning

"The bottom line is we can't do this alone," Lucas agreed.

The gang had all woken up early to try and figure out a plan of action.

"We could go to Hopper," Max stated. "Or Will's mom,"

"I think that's our best option," Mike sighed.

He went over and picked up the phone to call the police station, thinking Hop would be at work.

"Hawkins police," Flo answered.

"Hi," Mike said awkwardly. "Is the Chief there?"

"No," She said. "He hasn't been in for a few days, if you find him send him my way."

"….okay," Mike said dazed as he hung up the phone.

He turned back to the friend group who looked at him curiously.

"He wasn't in yesterday," He said looking directly at El.

El didn't know what to say, he should have been at work. Her heart started to pound a little harder as she got up and dialed the number to the cabin. The phone rang and rang but there was no answer.

As she hung up, she shook her head at Mike.

"Let me try my Mom," Will said joining the group by the phone attached to the wall.

Once again, the line rang and rang but only the answering machine picked up.

"Okay this is weird," Lucas said becoming slightly panicked.

"I need to find him," El said looking around the room for something to tie around her head.

"Here," Mike said handing her a pillowcase off the pillow next to him on the floor.

El smiled gratefully at Mike as she took his offer and sat down on the couch as everyone sat opposite her. She began to concentrate, where was her father? It took a moment but suddenly she heard a faint grumbled she knew all too well. As he came into view it looked like he was swatting bugs away from himself.

"I found him," El said to the others who breathed a sigh of relief.

"Where is he?" Max asked.

"Woods," El said simply.

As she continued to watch she had no idea why Hop would be in the woods. What she was seeing did not give her much of a clue either.

"Woods?" Lucas asked looking at the others.

El focused more closely, Hop was talking to someone. Suddenly Joyce came into view. They were arguing about something.

"He's with…" El began to explain. "Will's mom."

"My…my mom?!" Will asked shocked.

"What are they doing?" Max asked curiously.

El tried to block out the voices of her friends to hear what Joyce and Hop were talking about, she caught the tail end of Joyce's sentence.

"Il…an….ois," El sounded out each syllable. "They're going to Illinois."

Suddenly there was a pounding on the basement door.

"Mike breakfast!" Mrs. Wheeler called.

"NOT NOW MOM!" Mike screamed back.

"Illinois? Illinois? Like the state? The state of Illinois?" Mike stammered as El took off her blindfold.

Max looked over at Mike with an annoyed expression. How many times can he say the word Illinois in a sentence?

"Illinois," El said unsure as she shrugged her shoulders.

"It's got to be the state," Lucas said.

"A what?" El asked.

"It's a place," Mike explained. "Hawkins in our town but its in a state called Indiana. Hopper and Joyce are apparently going to the state of Illinois, which is next to us."

El nodded her head, thankful for the explanation.

"That doesn't make sense though," Will stammered. "Why are they going there,"

Max noticed El began subconsciously wiping under her nose, but the blood had begun to dry.

"You guys figure that out," Max interrupted taking her friend by the hand. "I'm going to help El clean up."

The boys watched as Max lead El into the bathroom and shut the door. El remained silent as her friend helped her.

Max turned on the water and grabbed a face cloth from the pile next to the sink. She ran it under some warm water and brought it to El's nose. She tried to be gentle as she whipped the blood.

Both her and El turned their attention to the red marks on El's neck from Billy. El grazed them with her fingertips, it was still slightly swollen but not nearly as bad.

"Does it still hurt?" Max asked.

It looked painful, Max thought to herself. She still couldn't believe Billy done that to her friend. Except, it wasn't really Billy it was the mind flayer making Billy do these awful things.

"Only when I talk," El said quietly.

"Well it's a good thing you're not Mike then," Max teased. "Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, you'd be in constant pain."

El laughed a long with Max. She had to admit Mike did talk a lot. Sometimes it was because he was nervous, usually its just because he had a lot of idea and needed to get them out.

As Max continue to tease the boys El could hear Mike from the other side of the door.

"Somethings not right," She heard him ramble. "I can't get Hopper off my back all summer and all of a sudden, he's hiking with Will's mom to Illinois? And Dustin's MIA too? I mean this can't be a coincidence."

"What does it matter?!" Lucas said exasperated. "The point is they're not here! It's up to us!"

"Up to us to do what exactly?" Mike asked.

"Find Billy and stop him," Lucas explained.

"Okay that's a really nice sentiment but even if El could find him again and that's a pretty big if," Mike argued. "Then what?"

"Hey they're talking about you," Max said stopping her rant to hear what they boys were saying.

"We burn the shit out of him," Lucas offered. "And make sure he doesn't escape this time."

"Okay then what?" Mike asked.

"Then we win," Lucas tried.

Both El and Max rolled their eyes as Max fixed El's hair.

"No see that's the problem," Mike argued. "We don't, we don't win! We got the mind flayer out of Will before and he just came right back. We don't just have to stop Billy, we have to stop the mind flayer."

"How the hell do we do that?" Lucas asked.

"I don't know!" Mike said defeated.

"Maybe El does," Will said hopefully.

Max raised an eyebrow in the mirror as they listened, there was a pause in the conversation.

"What are they still doing in there?" Mike asked to no one in particular.

"I dunno," Lucas said with a mouthful. "Girls just like hanging out in bathrooms."

"Oh my god," Max laughed quietly.

"Why?" Mike asked confused.

"I dunno," Lucas grumbled eating some more.

"They're conspiring against me," Mike whispered.

El turned to look at Max, what did conspire mean? And why did Mike think that's what they were doing?

"That's what your concerned about right now?!" Will whisper yelled.

"Its not my main concern," Mike defended. "It's just a sub-concern."

"I thought it was already over," Will shot back.

"It's not over! Okay? We're just taking a break," Mike blushed.

El blushed slightly as Mike defended their relationship. It made her heart flutter a bit.

"She said she dumped your ass," Will said harshly. "That doesn't

sound like a break."

"It wasn't!" Max yelled from the bathroom. "You guys do realize we can still hear everything you're saying, right?"

El giggled as Max rolled her eyes at their stupidity.

"Conspiring I told you their conspiring," Mike said shaking his head.

Will sighed and walked away from his friend. Just then there was a knock on the basement door.

"NOT NOW MOM!" Mike yelled.

"Mike open the door!" Nancy yelled from upstairs.

As Mike look up at the door confused he heard the bathroom door open. El and Max slowly came out with matching curious expressions.

Mike ran up the stairs and opened the door to reveal his sister and Johnathan looking worried.

"Is Will here?!" Johnathan asked quickly trying to see downstairs.

"Yeah," Mike said. "What's up?"

"Johnathan?" Will called as he went over to the bottom of the stairs after hearing his brothers voice.

"Thank god," Johnathan said pushing past Mike to get to his brother.

"What's going on?" Mike asked.

"I think the Mind flayer is back," Nancy said.

"What? Why?" Mike asked. He knew they had the exact same news but he wanted to hear Nancy's explanation first.

"A lady I was interviewing for the paper I think she is being controlled by the mindflayer," She said quickly. "Maybe she's the new host."

"No that can't be," Mike said confused.

"Why not?" Nancy said shocked that her brother didn't believe her. "I have proof!"

"Because we just had an intense showdown with Billy at the pool where we tested to see if he was the host and he nearly killed us all," Mike spat out quickly.

Nancy's eyes almost fell out of her head and Jonathan looked like he might be sick.

"Billy Hargrove?" Nancy asked. "Are you guys okay?"

"Yeah," Lucas chimed in. "Thankfully El was there and she tossed Billy through the wall,"

Nancy looked at the brown haired girl seated on the couch. She still couldn't believe she was the same shy little girl with the shaved head all those years ago. She was extremely powerful and she was so proud and grateful for her keeping everyone safe.

"Not before he almost choked her to death," Mike interjected.

"What!" Nancy yelled kneeling down in front of El to get a good look.

El tilted her head up so Nancy could see the marks Billy left. Nancy winced as she touched her neck.

"You sure you're okay?" Nancy whispered to El.

El just nodded her head.

"So what happened with Billy," Nancy asked. "How do you know he's the host,"

"We did a sauna test," Will explained. "We locked him in the sauna and turned it up really hot to see how he would react. He told us everything about the mind flayer and how it's made him do all these bad things."

"Not to mention he has enough strength to break out of the sauna and

almost kill Eleven," Lucas added.

Nancy just nodded her head. Billy must be the host, but if that was true what happened with Mrs. Driscole.

So what happened with the lady?" Will asked.

"Yeah what makes you think she's a host," Mike added.

"Right," Nancy said coming back to her senses. "I'll explain."

All the curious teens leaned forward to hear Nancy explain the rats and Mrs Driscol. As Nancy spoke both El and Will began to get goosebumps.

"I went to visit her at the hospital last night," Nancy continued. "She was fine and then suddenly she was thrashing and her veins were popping out and she was screaming. Demonic like screams."

Everyone was silent as Nancy shook her head trying to get the image from her mind.

"She looked me right in the eyes," Nancy explained. "It was the same thing, the exact same thing that happened to Will last year."

"And look at this," Nancy said crouching down to the table to show them a piece of paper. "Look at the body temperatures."

The kids leaned over to look at the paper, all the temperatures were below what they should have been.

"He likes it cold," Will said confirming Nancy's hunch.

"Okay so this crazy old woman who was eating fertilizer," Mike said trying to wrap his head around the story.

"Mrs Driscol," Nancy interjected.

"Right yeah Mrs. Driscol," Mike continued. "What time was this attack?"

"Last night," Nancy said obviously. Hadn't she already explained this

part?

"Right but what time last night?" Mike asked.

"Around 9," Nancy said quickly.

All the teens looked at each other as their hears sank, they knew this had to mean something.

"You waited all night to call," Jonathan whispered.

"I was waiting for the doctors to run some tests," Nancy said sheepishly.

"You weren't there?!" Will said accusingly to his brother.

"Well I'm here now aren't I?" He said in frustration.

"Hallelujah," Nancy said a little too sarcastically.

"Oooo," Lucas winced.

Mike looked over at El who looked at Jonathan and Nancy sadly. Mike sensed some tension between them and realized he wasn't the only one having romantic problems.

"Um so what time was your sauna test?" Nancy said trying to get back on track.

"Around 9," The group said in unison.

"Well that proves it," Nancy said excitedly. "That proves my theory."

"She's flayed," Mike agreed. "Just like Billy."

"Flayed?" Jonathan asked.

"The mind flayer he flays people." Mike explains. "Takes over their minds. Once they do that they basically become him."

"If there are two flayed," Lucas began.

"We have to assume there are more," Will continues.

El's hairs begin to stand on end. The thought of an army of flayed people made her want to be sick.

"Heather," She said to herself. That must have been what she saw.

Max looked over at her friend. She felt bad, El had a bad feeling about Billy and Heather from the very beginning and Max told her it was nothing.

"Billy was doing something to her." El explained when she saw everyone's eyes on her

Her mind wandered back to the void where she saw Billy leaning over Heather. Her grimaced as she continued to explain.

"She was scared," El said quietly. "She was screaming,"

It took all of Mikes self control not to reach over and take El's hand. She had obviously seen a lot in the void, not to mention what she had just been through with Billy.

"Bad screams," El said as if she was making a point.

"What's a good scream?" Lucas asked confused.

"Max said…" El began but was then cut off by her red haired friend.

"Doesn't matter," Max said quickly.

The boys blushed slightly as they caught on to what Max had meant. Mike shook his head, what had Max been teaching El over the past few days.

"I'm sorry I'm lost," Nancy said. "Who is Heather?"

"She's a lifeguard at the pool," Max explained.

"Heather Holloway?" Nancy asked.

Even though no one responded Nancy looked to Jonathan.

"Tom," They both said at the same time.

"What?" Mike asked trying to be in the loop.

"Our boss at the paper," Nancy said turning on her heels. "Everyone follow me."

"Where are we going?" Will asked as they climbed the stairs.

"To Heathers house," Nancy said. "We gotta see what's going on."

Everyone piled into Nancy's car and drove to the Holloways house.

Nancy rang the doorbell twice….everyone in front of the door felt a little uneasy. The silence to them meant something was wrong.

Nancy and Johnathan turned around and looked at El.

El noticed this and became concerned, the worry melted away when she saw Nancy slide her eyes towards the door.

"Right," El thought to herself. She concentrated and nodded her head and the door clicked open.

"Tom!" Nancy called to the silent house. "Heather,"

El shivered slightly, both from the silence and from the chill coming from the house.

"Jesus it's freezing," Max said as they walked through the house.

As they continued, nothing looked out of the ordinary.

"Do you smell that?" Nancy asked.

The group turned back to her, they had been looking around the room for any signs of something strange.

Nancy turned to the kitchen and was caught off guard by the smell of chemicals, there were cans of chemicals all over the counter, spilled everywhere.

"More chemicals," Nancy said confused.

"You think their guzzling this shit?" Jonathan asked.

"Yeah either that or they just went on a hell of a cleaning spree," Nancy shot back.

"But last year Will didn't eat chemicals," Max observed. "Did you?"

"No," Will said quietly. "This is something new."

"Mr. Clark," Mike said suddenly. "Fifth grade, what happens when you mix chemicals together?"

"You create a new substance," Will and Lucas say in unison.

El watched with slight awe at how smart her friends are. She knew some would call them nerds, but they knew a lot. She hoped one day she would know as much as them.

"What if they're making something?" Mike mused.

"In themselves?" Max wondered. "I mean come on if you drink this crap it'll kill you."

"Yeah," Lucas agreed. "If you're human,"

Suddenly Nancy heard the sound of a door opening.

Mike and El caught eyes as they followed Nancy through the house. El blushed lightly as Nancy and Jonathan filled in the blanks of what must have happened to Tom. Mike couldn't help keep a close eye on El. He was still shaken by what had happened to her the night before.

Mike had to admit he was impressed with his sister for figuring all this out just by looking for clues in the house.

"There must be a place where all of this started right?" Nancy mused. "The source."

"Somewhere he didn't want me to see," El clued in.

"If we can find the source then maybe we can stop him," Nancy wondered. "or at least stop it from spreading or doing whatever the hell its doing with those chemicals."

"How do we find it?" El asked.

"Mrs. Driscol," Will pipped up suddenly. Everyone turned to look at him with curiosity.

"If she wants to go back so badly why don't we let her," He said.

Everyone turned back to Nancy who nodded her head. "Alright lets go,"

Once the group had decided to go to the hospital Nancy hoped the "friendly" receptionist wouldn't be there. Sure, enough as they tried to sneak passed, she told them only two could go up at a time.

"You guys wait here," Nancy whispered to the teens as she pointed towards the waiting area.

"You sure?" Mike asked apprehensively.

"Yeah we will be fine," Nancy smiled tilting her head to Johnathan.

"Okay," Mike nodded as they two escaped to the elevator.

All the teens shuffled around unsure of what to do next. Mike and El locked eyes again, it looked like she was about to say something when Max grabbed her arm.

"Come on," She said quietly. "Let's go look at some magazines."

El frowned slightly but nodded her head and followed her friend. After all that's been happening she was so torn. Max told her so many things, and opened her eyes to how much of a liar Mike was being. But at the same time El knew that he meant well and that she really wanted them to not be mad at each other anymore.

"Come on man let's get a snack," Lucas said patting Mike on the back. "You want anything Will?"

"No thanks," Will said looking a little jumpy.

Mike sighed as he put in some money and made his choice of snack. He so wished Max would leave El alone for a few minutes so he could

talk to her. His mind was elsewhere until he heard the unmistakable sound of the machine coming to life, but his candy didn't come out.

"Aw come on you piece of shit," Mike growled.

From across the room El lifted her head at Mikes words. She looked curiously over to what was bothering him. She watched as he and Lucas began hitting the machine. She took a quick look at Max who was immersed in her magazine. With the flick of her head El "nudged" the machine to help Mike out.

Both boys were taken a back instantly by all the candy coming down. They both looked directly at El who simply averted her eyes and whipped her nose quickly.

Lucas shrugged his shoulders and began picking up candy. Mike however continued to look at El.

"Thanks," He said sincerely.

She smiled slightly and nodded back at him. She quickly looked back to Max to find that she missed the whole interaction.

Mike bent down to help Lucas but he couldn't help but look back at his ex-girlfriend. Lucas noticed his gaze and leaned closer to Mike.

"Dude," Lucas began slowly. "I think that was it,"

"That was what?" Mike asked confused.

"The olive branch," Lucas whispered.

"…the what?" Mike whispered back and his face scrunched up.

"Oh my god," Lucas marveled. "You're helpless."

Mike felt as if his friend was speaking a different language

"Okay," Lucas said placing a hand on Mike's shoulder. "I'll distract Max, give you an opening, then talk to her. Alright?"

Mike nodded and looked back to the beautiful girl he had grown so

infatuated with. He hoped this would go better than last time he tried to talk to her. Granted that was only yesterday.

As Lucas tried to distract Max, Mike sat to think about what he would say to El. He decided that he should just speak the truth.

"Hey want some candy?" Lucas asked Max showing her his arm full. He placed the candy all over the table for everyone to share.

"Yeah I'll have some skittles stalker," Max laughed as Lucas grabbed them at the same time.

"Ah ah ah," He laughed. "I'll throw you catch,"

"Oh you're on," Max laughed getting up and going to the corner with Lucas.

Eleven watched as Max left with Lucas, she sat on one of the chairs and continued to read her magazine. She could feel Mike sit down beside her, she wasn't sure what to say, she didn't know if he was still mad.

"Hi," Mike said trying to act casual but he had no idea what he was doing.

"Hi," El said awkwardly. How was it only a few days ago they were talking about everything and kissing in her bedroom. What happened to make them act like strangers.

"Does your species like M&M's?" Mike smirked as he held up the package of candy.

El didn't answer but extended her hand. Mike gratefully shook the bag into her hand. She smirked up at him as she took the candy.

"I like the new look by the way it's cool," Mike offered.

It was true, he liked the way El looked before but just from the way she acted in these new clothes she was happier. They very much suited the most amazing girl he had ever met.

"Thanks," She replied sweetly.

They both stole glances as each other as they smirked and ate candy.

Mike wanted to pour his heart out to Eleven right then and there. To tell her how sorry he was for being such an idiot. But as he sat in silence, watching her smile, he couldn't get anything out. He was so enjoying having her not be angry with him. He knew it had only been a few days but it was too long.

El felt the same, she wanted to talk with Mike about everything that had gone on between them over the past few days. He lied but maybe she had been a little hard on him, and for that she was sorry. As she went to open her mouth Max and Lucas and Will sat down around them.

Once they saw that Mike and Eleven didn't seem to be fighting Will made the first move to sit, then Lucas and Max followed. Max was showing Lucas the magazine she was reading. Will was looking around the hospital in a daze.

El leaned closer to Mike.

"What makes M&M's so good?" She wondered looking at the plain brown package.

"I dunno," Mike smirked as he felt her lean into his side. "Let's look."

The two teens got a strange kick out of reading the ingredients list on the bag of M&M's.

"Whats…..soy lecithin?" El sounded out the word slowly.

"Or dextrin?" Mike asked confused. "Carnauba wax?"

"Sounds gross," El giggled.

"But yet they taste so good," Mike said clutching the bag. "Must be the gum acacia."

El continued to laugh then she noticed Will rise from his seat. She looked up and noticed the lights were flickering. She grabbed a hold of Mike's arm, unsure of what was happening.

Sorry to leave it on such a cliff-hanger. I originally kept going but after re-watching the episode I realized it ended here. I hope the next chapter won't take as long, but I cannot make any promises. Thanks for reading. Leave a review to let me know what you think or if you have any suggestions for missing moments.

6. Episode 6: E Pluribus Unum

Episode 6

Okay, I was so excited to write this chapter. No lie, this was the episode that inspired me to write this story. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

Everyone followed suit and stood up as they stared at the flickering lights. It could be a coincidence, Max thought to herself. But after all that had happened, the teens knew this was not a good sign.

Will suddenly brought his hand up to the back of his neck, as if to feel the hairs standing on end.

"He's here," He said with wide eyes.

Mike turned as he heard El exhale forcefully through her nose as if she was angry. With her brow furrowed she looked around the room and headed for the elevator. The rest of the group followed along.

"Hey hey hey!" The receptionist called after the group who just walked past her with purpose. "Two at a time!"

The lights continued to go crazy as Max furiously pushed the elevator button. El continued to scan the hallway, looking for any signs of the mind flayer.

"Stairs," Mike said becoming too impatient to wait for the elevator. His sister could be in trouble.

The group took the stairs two at a time as they raced to find Nancy and Jonathan.

"How will we know where they are?" Max called from the back of the group.

"Look for the giant mind flayer," Mike shot back.

They heard some commotion, so they went to the third floor.

"Jesus," Lucas said as they look out into a destroyed hallway with blood and injured people everywhere.

"This way," Will said suddenly as he ran down the hall towards another stairwell.

The group followed as he entered the part of the hospital that was under construction.

As they got closer they could hear screaming and the sound of metal being smashed.

"Nancy!" Mike yelled as they sprinted towards the noise.

"Jonathan!" Will yelled as they turned the corner and saw Jonathan banging an oxygen tank against the door.

"Nancy," He said out of breath pointing towards the door. "Mind flayer, Nancy."

El stepped forward instantly while pushing her friends back from the door. She threw out her hands and the door went flying off the hinges into the room.

El took a step forward and the group gasped at the sight of the monster standing over Nancy.

"Jesus," Mike said shocked.

"What the fuck?" Max whispered from her spot in the doorway.

Everyone flinched as the monster turned around to show its horrible teeth and growled, beginning to come toward them.

El was quicker though, with a scream she used all her force to throw the monster into the right wall, then the left, then the ceiling, then the ground.

She began to feel slightly lightheaded, but she hoped this was damaging the monster in some way. She tried to be careful as she knew Nancy was still on the ground as well.

All the teen gawked in the doorway; grateful they had El on their side. They stood in awe as they watched her throw the monster around like a rag doll.

As the monster began to get up again Mike almost grabbed El's shoulder to pull her out of the way.

That's it, El thought to herself. She focused her rage towards the mind flayer to push it out of the window and into the parking lot.

"Go!" El yelled as she pushed Jonathan towards Nancy.

Before her friends could see if Nancy was okay El was running back towards the stairs. They all followed to the front of the hospital where they watched as the monster melted away into the sewer.

None of them had ever seen anything like it before. A giant monster suddenly turning to goo and slithering like a snake underground.

As they tried to catch their breath, they were all thinking the same thing. We do not know what we're dealing with here.

"Now what?" Will said breaking the silence.

"Let's go home," Nancy said still shaking slightly. "We gotta figure some stuff out."

"We can't Mom will wonder what we're all doing together," Mike argued.

"It's late anyway," Jonathan said quietly. "We should get some rest."

"But-" Nancy began to protest when Jonathan shot her a look. "fine."

"We can meet up tomorrow to start hatching a plan," Lucas agreed.

"Where should we go?" Will asked.

"The cabin," El suggested. "In case Hop comes back, and none of your parents will know,"

"Yeah, where is Hopper?" Nancy asked.

"And mom?" Jonathan added equally as confused.

"We will explain on the drive," Mike sighed as they got back into Nancy's car.

As Nancy and the gang drove out to El's cabin Mike got an uneasy feeling in his stomach. The last time he had been to the cabin he and El were still together. Sneaking kisses between moments when Hopper would check up on them. So much had changed over the past few days.

"You okay?" Will asked.

"Yeah," Mike smiled slightly.

"Here we are," Nancy said as she stopped in front of the wood cabin.

They all walked up and Mike used the secret knock. Soon the door opened with no one standing behind it.

As the group peered in, they saw Max and El sitting at the small kitchen table.

"Hi," El smiled as they all shuffled in. Soon they were all gathered around the coffee table trying to figure out a plan.

"We need to know what their planning," Nancy said.

"How do we do that?" Lucas asked.

"El do you think you could find the flayed?" Jonathan asked. "Maybe you can see what they're up to?"

"I'll try," El said standing up, "I'll just be in here where it's quieter."

She went over to her bedroom door and stopped to turn back to the group.

"Help yourself," She said shyly as her eyes flicked towards the kitchen. "There's food and drinks,"

"Thanks," Nancy smiled.

Mike tried to hide his smile. El was a very good host. He could still remember Hopper explaining to her what being a good host meant one winter night he came to visit.

"You said the stores had some stuff that went missing," Will asked Nancy. "You should call them for updates."

"Good idea," Nancy said grabbing Jonathan as they headed to the kitchen to make phone calls. Will followed along behind them.

"Well she did say help yourself," Lucas said heading to the kitchen in search of food.

Max and Mike sat in silence hoping to hear good news from either El or Nancy soon.

Mike sat fidgeting as he waited for news from anyone. He could hear Nancy talking on the phone, but it didn't seem like she was getting anywhere. He began to worry about El, she had been in the void for almost half an hour.

"I'm going to go check on her," Mike said standing up suddenly and heading for the door.

"Ugh no," Max blocked his path as she walked into the room from the kitchen.

"I'm worried about her," Mike explained.

"We need to find the flayed right?" Max shrugged. "So let her find them, she's fine,"

Lucas nodded his head reassuringly, but Mike was still panicked. He paced back and forth in front of her door for another 10 minutes.

"Will you stop?" Max begged.

"Yeah man, what do you think is happening?" Lucas asked. "She's probably just having a hard time finding them."

"It can't be good for her to be in there for this long!" Mike worried.

"Mike," Max said trying to keep her cool. "You need to relax."

Max had no idea why Mike was acting this way. She figured it was his overprotectiveness. He wanted to make all the choices for El.

"What if she gets brain damage or something?" Mike panicked.

"Oh shit," Lucas said with wide eyes. "Is that like a real thing?"

"No," Max argued. "It's not he made it up, Mike doesn't know what the hell he's talking about."

"Oh, and you do?!" Mike said becoming defensive.

Max had barely known El a year and suddenly she knows what's best for her? Mike was becoming furious.

"No," Max sighed. "See that's the difference between you and me. I don't act like I know everything!"

"What's that supposed to mean?" Mike shot back.

"It means that you should back off and stop acting like you know what's best for El," Max said as she began to raise her voice.

"Woah Woah," Lucas said getting between one of his best friends and his girlfriend. "Let's calm down."

"No what the hell are you talking about Max?" Mike said moving Lucas's arm. "You haven't even known her that long!"

"I know," Max yelled. "But I know that she can do things for herself, you don't have to baby her and make all her choices for her."

I do not baby her," Mike yelled as his temper got the best of him.

"She's already almost died saving us twice," Mike spat as he felt tears begin to well up in his eyes. "I don't want her using her powers so much that it sucks the life out of her."

"The only person who knows anything about El's powers is EL!" Max

argued back not seeing the fear in Mike's eyes.

"But I don't need you and everyone else pressuring her into thinking our only hope is for her to overuse her powers," Mike screamed.

"I'm not pressuring her into anything!" Max yelled back.

"Okay, guys!" Lucas said seeing that this wasn't going to end well.

"Ughhhh," Max grunted as she stormed off to the kitchen to get Nancy's opinion.

As Mike and Max's voices began to get louder it pulled El from the void. She had found Billy but she didn't know what to make of what she found. She sat on the floor and took off her blindfold. She could hear Mike and Max yelling and she wondered what was wrong.

"She's already almost died saving us twice," She heard Mike yell "I don't want her using her powers so much that it sucks the life out of her."

She frowned as she put her blindfold away. She didn't like it when Mike worried about her. As she whipped the blood from under her nose and cleaned herself up, she heard the argument move into the kitchen.

"The fact is she's not yours!" El could hear Max explain as she looked in the mirror. "She's her own person fully capable of making her own decisions."

As El heard the argument escalate, she began to move quicker. Cleaning up all the dirty tissues so she could go out and stop this argument.

She hated Max and Mike fighting because she liked both of them, she wanted everyone to be friends. El was about to open the door when she stopped. She heard something interesting and leaned closer to the door.

"I'm just trying to demonstrate how careless Max is with Eleven's powers," Mike said. "In fact, how careless all of you are!"

El furrowed her brow, she didn't think her friends were being careless. They had to do something and El was the only one who could help.

"You're treating her like some kind of machine when she's not a machine," Mike began to ramble. "And I don't want her to die looking for the flayed when they've obviously vanished off the face of the earth! So can we please come up with a new plan? Because I love her and I can't lose her again!"

Eleven's hand froze. She had heard that correctly right? He said he loved her. She allowed her heart to swell for exactly 2 seconds then she opened the door.

She tried to make her face seem oblivious. As all eyes turned to her it took all El had not to smile at Mike. She decided to act as if she hadn't heard anything, she wanted Mike to tell her he loved her to her face, not through a wall.

"What's going on?" El asked with her best-confused expression.

"Nothing! Nothing," Mike said forcefully.

"Just family discussion," Lucas explained with a smirk.

"Oh," El said, she felt like she had intruded on something like she should leave.

Mike looked very nervous, he looked at her then looked away quickly.

"I found him," El said quietly.

"Found who?" Nancy asked slowly.

"Billy,"

"That's great!" Max exclaimed.

"I don't know," El said unsure she turned to walk into the living room. "I'll explain."

Everyone settled into the living room furniture as El explained what she saw.

"He's just sitting in his room," El said with a confused expression. "Like he's frozen or waiting."

"Maybe the mind flayer is dormant," Will suggested. "If we check back in on him in a little bit maybe he will take you to the source."

The group checked in on a few leads and let El rest for a bit before she turned on the TV in the living room and went back into the void.

Mike looked curiously at El as her breathing began to pick up the pace. He was about to lean forward and touch her arm when she reached up and took off the blindfold.

Mike frowned as he watched El look shaken up again. He couldn't imagine what it was like to be in that void.

"What's he doing now?" Max asked with a concerned expression.

El turned her head around to look at the rest of the group.

"Same thing," She grimaced and began to cough.

"You okay?" Nancy asked.

"Water," El said in a hoarse voice as she made her way to the kitchen.

"And that's not normal for Billy?" Nancy asked Max once El left.

"Billy staying in his room on the Fourth of July? No that's not normal," Max sighed.

"He wants us to find him," Will stated.

"Yeah that's what I'm afraid of," Nancy said biting her lip. "If we go to Billy then the rest of the flayed know where we are."

"It's a trap I agree," Mike said. "We'll be ambushed."

"We won't be surprised," Lucas offered. "We'll know that their coming and we will kick their flayed butts."

"You mean El will kick their butts," Max said sadly.

"It's too risky," Jonathan said shaking his head.

"Yeah and unnecessary," Nancy agreed. "Killing the flayed won't stop the mind flayer. We have to find out where it's spreading from, we have to find the source."

"Billy knows it," El said walking back into the room. "Billy's been there….to the source,"

"Yeah but," Mike began to explain the conversation El just missed but she cut him off.

"It's a trap, I know," El said softly. "We can't go to Billy, but I think there's another way. A way for me to see where he's been."

"How?" Mike asked after locking eyes with El for a few minutes.

"When I went to visit Mama," El explained. "I went into the void she took my hand and showed me things that happened before."

Mike nodded his head. The rest of the group felt like they were intruding on a private conversation. Mike had obviously heard this story before.

"You think you could do it with Billy?" Nancy wondered.

"Maybe," El said. "If it's actually Billy maybe he would show me,"

"Worth a try," Will shrugged.

El nodded her head and gathered her blindfold again and sat in front of the TV.

Mike's stomach was turning into knots. He loved El so much and he wanted to protect her from anything harmful. He wasn't sure why, but he had a bad feeling about this plan. He had to say something to El.

He slid off the armchair next to El.

"El," Mike whispered. "I know you think you have to do this, but you don't."

Behind him, Max heard Mike begin to talk and rolled her eyes. Here he goes again, trying to tell her what's best.

"It's just you've only done this before once," Mike continued. "And your mom, she loved you and wanted you to know what happened. Billy's mind is sick, diseased, the mind flayer is in him."

El was touched by Mike's worry. It made her eyes well up slightly when Mike spoke about her mother. She had told Mike the whole story one night around Christmas, he was so sweet and understanding and curious about it.

"He can't hurt me," El assured. "Not in there."

"We don't know that," Mike pleaded.

El saw the worry in Mikes's eyes and move closer and took his hand in hers. She looked him straight in the eyes. She felt more confident in doing this after what she overheard earlier, she knew how much he loved her, how much he cared, and how much he worried.

"Mike," She said softly. "I need you to trust me,"

At that moment both of their memories went back to the first day in Mike's house when he was hiding Eleven. "Trust me," Mike said to El as he moved the armchair back.

Mike still wasn't so sure, but he knew if he was going to keep El around and still allow her to be her own person this is what he had to do. He had to trust her even though he had a bad feeling. He turned his head and saw Max who was pretending not to listen. She raised her eyebrows as if to say "duh let her do it"

"Yeah," Mike said turning back to El. "Just be careful,"

El nodded with a half-smile as Mike went back to his spot in the armchair. Everyone gathered around as El went back into the void. Mike took a deep breath and locked eyes with his sister. Nancy could see Mike was panicked but she tried to give him a reassuring smile.

They waited for El to say something, anything to give them a clue if it was working or not. Suddenly El began to breathe a little heavier like she was scared.

"Somethings wrong," Mike said to the group as El continued to panic.

"What do we do?" Will asked.

"El are you okay?" Mike said raising his voice. He knew she could hear him. "Are you okay?"

He watched her closely as she began to calm down.

"I'm okay," She whimpered.

"What's going on?" He asked wishing he could see what she saw right now.

"On a beach," She said simply.

Everyone looked at each other in confusion. Where could she be?

"Okay I may be dense," Lucas began. "But last I checked there weren't any beaches in Hawkins."

"What else do you see?" Max tried.

El stayed silent for a few minutes.

"A woman, she's pretty," El said quietly. "I think she's looking at me."

Everyone tried to piece together the puzzle of what El might be seeing.

"There's a boy," El continued. "It's Billy,"

"It's California," Max said deep in thought. "It's a memory."

Mike furrowed his brow trying to figure out why Billy would be showing El his childhood.

"I think I see it," El said unsure. "The source."

Nancy sat up straight, hoping this would give us something to go off. Everyone held their breath as El tried to figure out where they needed to go.

"I think I found it," She sighed. "The source."

"Where El where are you?" Max said a little too forcefully for Mike's liking.

"Brimborn," El said. "Steal works."

Jonathan rushed over to find an address. Mike tapped his leg impatiently. He wanted to get El out of there before something happened.

"Steal works….steal works," Jonathan said. "Found it 6522 Cherry Oak drive."

"That's close," Nancy said.

"El we found it, get out of there!" Mike said quickly. "Get out!"

Everyone waited for a moment expecting El to take off her blindfold but she didn't.

"What's happening?" Nancy asked Mike.

"I don't know," Mike said eyeing El. "El are you okay? El?"

El did not move. Her breathing picked up a bit and she began to mumble something. As if someone was stopping her from speaking.

"Mm….mii….ke.." She mumbled incoherently.

"If she calling for you?" Will asked.

"I can't tell," Mike said in full-blown worry now. "She can usually talk when she's in the void."

El stopped mumbling, her breathing slowed but something still seemed off. No one in the group knew what to do, they just waited hoping she would come back to them soon.

"She's bleeding more than normal," Mike noticed as El's nose began to bleed from both nostrils.

Mike knew something was not right, he wanted to go over and shake El but he knew it wouldn't do any good. It was her mind that was with Billy. He was worried that maybe Billy had caught on and the mind flayer was hurting El. Mike waited on the edge of the armchair waiting for something to happen.

Suddenly El's arms shot up and ripped off the blindfold with a terrifying scream. Her arms went out to the sides as if to grab something.

"NOOOOOOOOOOO," She yelled.

Mike was at her side instantly before anyone else even had time to react.

"El are you okay?" Mike asked as his heart jumped out of his chest.

El looked terrified and looked around as if she wasn't sure where she was. She turned to Mike and brought her hand up to his face as if to be sure he was real. She let out a sigh of relief but instantly burst into tears.

"It's okay," Mike soothed as she hugged her close to him as she cried.

"No no no no," El sobbed into Mike's arm.

"It's okay," Mike said over and over as he rubbed her arm. "I got you, you're safe now."

Mike looked up at the group, all on their feet now ready to help Eleven in any way.

"Get her some water," Mike said quickly as Jonathan sprinted to the kitchen.

Everyone seemed to settle down as Mike tried to calm El. Soon she was able to catch her breath and stop crying. Jonathan handed her a glass of water and she took it gratefully.

"Better?" Mike asked softly.

El nodded but she still had tears running down her cheeks.

"El what happened?" Nancy asked gently.

"It's all my fault," El said quietly she closed her eyes. Fresh tears began to fall as she grabbed Mike's hand tightly.

Mike pulled her in close again. His heart broke. His gut had been right and even though El hadn't said it yet, he could feel it, they were in big trouble.

I hope you enjoyed! Please review to let me know what you think

7. Episode 7: The bite

Episode 7

Sorry, this update took so long. Being back at work takes a lot of my time. There is also so much happening in these next few episodes it is a little daunting to write. Here we go!

El shook with fear as she continued to sob in Mike's arms. This was all her fault, the mind flayer only wanted her.

"It's all my fault, its all my fault," She muttered.

The group looked on, unsure of what to do. Nancy locked eyes with her brother, she knew El needed him right now. She tilted her head towards the bathroom. Mike understood and nodded.

"Come here," Mike said gently helping El off the floor. "Let's get you cleaned up."

Max was about to offer herself for the job but was silenced by the way El leaned into Mike, wrapping her arms around his waist.

They slowly went into the washroom and closed the door. The party breathed a sigh of relief and continued to discuss what would happen next.

El sat on the edge of the bathtub and looked up at Mike, her breathing still panicked.

Mike picked up a washcloth and ran some warm water over it. He kneeled in front of El.

"May I?" He asked raising the cloth.

El just nodded, finally beginning to calm down once again.

"Whatever happened in there El," He said as he gently whipped the blood off her face. "We'll deal with it together."

"You guys shouldn't have to," El said as a single tear ran down her

face. "All these attacks they're all because of me."

"That's not true," Mike said finishing up with the washcloth and taking her hands in his.

"Billy said the mind flayer is after me," El sighed. "It wants me and it won't stop."

Mike got a sinking feeling in his stomach, of course, it was after the most powerful thing that could destroy it.

"We aren't going to let that happen," Mike said confidently.

"I don't want anyone else to get hurt," El whispered looking down at the floor. "You guys don't have to do this all to protect me."

"El," Mike said taking her face in his hand. "We wouldn't be alive without you, you've saved us so many times."

El melted into his warm touch. This was the closest they have been since breaking up.

"No," El responded. "You'd be living normal lives without me. I opened the gate and the mind flayer wants me."

"Brenner made you open the gate," Mike argued. "It doesn't matter. I wouldn't change any of it now."

El raised an eyebrow.

"It brought you to us," Mike said simply. "We needed each other."

Mike watched as her mouth began to turn up into a small smile. His eyes inadvertently flicked back and forth between her eyes and her lips. Slowly they both began to lean forward.

Suddenly a knock on the door brought them back to reality.

"Mike is everything okay?" Nancy's voice called from the other side of the door.

"Yeah," Mike said clearing his throat. "Just a second."

Mike got up and put the washcloth away. El maneuvered around him to splash some water on her face.

"Better?" He asked when she looked into the mirror and saw him standing behind her.

"Yeah," She smiled sadly and opened the door to join the others.

She sat on the couch and everyone gathered around.

"I tried to get out of the void," El began to explain. "I was back here, in the cabin but no one was here."

"You were still in the void?" Lucas asked. "Is that why you were calling for Mike?"

"Yes," El said as her cheeks turned ever so slightly red. "Billy was there."

"He said he was building something," El continued just above a whisper. "that it was all for me."

"Building something?" Max said puzzled. "Is he talking about the flayed?"

"He must be," Nancy said.

"So he's building an army just like we thought," Lucas said pacing behind the couch.

"Yeah but he's not building this army to spread," Mike assured.

"He's building it to stop Eleven," Will confirmed.

"Last year El closed the gate on him," Mike recapped. "I have a feeling that really pissed him off."

"Like royally," Lucas agreed.

"And the mind flayer now knows that she's the only thing that can stop him," Mike said putting all the information together. "But if she's out of the way."

"Game over," Lucas said sadly.

"He also said," El continued cautiously. "He was gonna kill all of you."

Everyone's eyes widened as the reality of the situation sunk in. El felt terrible that she dragged her friends into this mess, but she felt they had the right to know what the mind flayer was planning.

"Oh well that's nice," Max sighed.

Suddenly Nancy went ridged in the corner. Everyone turned to look at her to see what was going on. She stepped closer towards the window silently.

"Do you guys hear that?" She asked.

Everyone listened but could hear nothing over the July 4th festivities.

"It's just the fireworks," Jonathan said gently.

"Billy," Nancy said quickly turning around to El. "When he told you this it was here, in this room?"

El nodded her head, unsure of what Nancy was trying to say. Suddenly they all heard what sounded like a crack of thunder in the distance of the forest.

El began to get a bad feeling when out of the corner of her eye she saw Will reaching for the back of his neck.

"He knows were here," Will said.

The group all got up and went outside without a word. They looked into the distance, seeing the town fireworks going off in the sky. Just then they could see the outline of a giant spider-like creature knocking down trees in its path. The monster was a hundred times bigger than the one at the hospital. Everyone's blood ran cold at the sight of it. El feared she wasn't strong enough to fight something so big. She knew she had to try, for the sake of her friends she had to give it all she had.

"Back inside!" Nancy yelled.

Once the group was back in the cabin they all looked lost.

"What do we do!?" Will asked.

"Reinforce everything," Jonathan said. "Push all the furniture against the doors and windows, block everything. Find anything you can to fight this thing off"

The group began to do just as he said. Nancy found a gun and Jonathan found an ax.

As El looked around she couldn't imagine what Hopper would say if he were here to see the cabin this way.

"Help me with this?" El asked Mike from across the room. They were moving the coffee table to block the window.

"Yeah that's good like that," Mike said as he and El put it in place.

"Hey get away from the windows," Nancy called to El and Mike breaking them out of the conversation.

They made their way back over to the group in the middle of the room. Everything went silent as they waited.

The cabin began to shake slightly with the footsteps of the Mind Flayer. Dishes began rattling, causing everyone to shake in anticipation along with them.

"It's close," Will said quietly.

Outside trees began to sway and the lights began to flicker. One of the mugs fell off the counter, causing it to crash to the ground. El jumped at the sound, walking backward and grabbing a hold of Mike's arm for only a moment.

All was quiet for a moment as if the monster was gone. They all waited, wondering what would come next. Without warning one of the Mind flayers tentacles came flying through the window into the cabin. The group scattered with a scream. El through out her arm pushing her friends behind her. She stood in awe of the creature in front of her, wondering what she could do to stop it.

Before she could do anything, Jonathan began hitting it with an ax. After the second time, the tentacle hit Jonathan, throwing him into the wall. As it threatened to get closer Nancy began shooting it with the rifle she had locked and loaded. This only made the monster angrier.

Once Nancy ran out of bullets she pushed herself into the wall, waiting for an attack that never came. The group looked over and saw it was El who was holding the monster back with her powers.

El used her powers to get the tentacle away from Nancy and rip off the end of it, causing the rest of it to fly away through the window.

"Holy shit," Max said with a sigh of relief.

The relief only lasted a second as another tentacle burst into the cabin. El was ready and caught it instantly, stopping it in its tracks. Then another came in through the opposite window. Mike began to panic, what if this was too much for El, how was she going to stop this giant monster?

El weighed her options quickly and took a deep breath. She used her strength to rip off the ends of both tentacles, once again they fled away.

Just as she was catching her breath suddenly the roof of the cabin came off in a swift motion. The group saw the mouth of the giant monster and a tentacle-like tongue came flying towards El. Within seconds it had her by the ankle, threatening to eat her.

Without even thinking Mike's body went into action, springing forward to grab El's arm. El began to scream as Mike strained to keep hold of her. The rest of the group joined in, trying to get El out of the grasp of the mind flayer.

Mike used every ounce of strength he had to keep hold of El. All he could think about were all the times he let her go, he couldn't let it happen again. He didn't care what happened, he could not let her go again.

"Nancy shoot it!" Jonathan yelled as Nancy tried to reload the gun.

As Nancy shot off the gun Lucas looked around to try and find a way to help. He spotted the ax and jumped up to try and cut El free.

Just as Mike feared they were losing their grasp on El Lucas managed to sever tentacle that had hold of her. The momentum sent the party falling to the ground. El landing in Mike's arms.

"El!" Mike said trying to brush some of the hair out of her face. "El you okay?"

Mike looked into her eyes, she looked exhausted. She nodded her head but he could tell something was wrong. She gripped her hand around the back on his neck, she didn't want to let him go, she had been so scared.

Mike looked down and saw the mind flayer was still attached to El's ankle. He got up and instinctively pulled it off, throwing it into the corner. He winced as El screamed, he knew it had to hurt, but he couldn't leave it attached to her.

As the mind flayer roared on in anger, Nancy tried to reload the gun again. Everyone was shocked when El mustered up the strength to stand, leg still bleeding. She eyed the monster with determination. She knew if she didn't try to kill it first it would succeed in killing her.

With all the strength she had left and let out a scream and used her powers to tear the mind flayer in two.

As she released, she tumbled backward into Max's arms.

"Go go go!" Everyone began to scream. This was their chance, now that the monster was wounded.

Mike raced over and put one of El's arms around his shoulder, Max took the other. They all rushed out to Nancy's car. As everyone piled into the car Mike helped El in as she groaned in pain. Mike essentially sat her on his lap in an attempt to get into the car faster.

"Drive!" he yelled to his sister as she closed the car door.

They sped away leaving the monster behind in the forest for now.

"It's okay," Mike tried to sooth El as she breathed heavily, trying not to cry out in pain.

"We need to get her help," Jonathan said to Nancy as he looked back at El.

"I know where to go," Nancy said speeding off towards town.

Thankfully with everyone at the carnival the downtown was deserted.

"Mike," El said through her teeth as she gripped Mike's shoulder.

"I know," Mike said trying to calm her. "I know it hurts; we will make it better I promise."

El locked eyes with him, seeing the truth behind his words but also the fear. She focused on taking deep breaths, trying to curb the pain.

Nancy drove like she was in an action movie, tires squealing as they pulled up to Bradley's Big Buy. Nancy and Jonathan broke down the glass door as Max and Mike helped El out of the car and into the store. El winced in pain as her friends helped her, each time she even tried to put weight on her leg it throbbed.

They all followed Nancy as she walked towards the pharmacy aisle.

"Ok get her down," Nancy said hastily as she grabbed rubbing alcohol and gauze.

Mike and Max eased El onto the floor, propped up by the shelving behind her. As Mike removed her arm from around his neck, she gave him a grateful look, which didn't go unnoticed.

"Ok let me see," Nancy said to El as she began to pull up her pant leg revealing a deep gash that oozed thick blood.

"Oh shit," Max said under her breath. The whole group looked wide-eyed at the wound the mind flayer left behind.

"Mmmmm," El suppressed her groan as the pain continued.

Nancy began to get to work before Max stopped her.

"Wow hey, what are you doing?" Max asked.

"I'm cleaning the wound," Nancy said as if it was obvious, trying to continue her task.

El let out another small groan catching Mike's attention. He shifted closer to her, he was on one knee and he grabbed her hand placing it on his knee.

"Hey your gonna be okay," Mike whispered to her. "Squeeze my hand, try to take your mind off the pain."

"No first we need to stop the bleeding, then clean, then disinfect, then bandage," Max explained as Nancy and Jonathan gave her a surprised look. "I skateboard trust me."

"Mike hold this," Max said gently as she placed some gauze over El's wound. She physically took Mike's hand and placed it on top of the wound.

El cried out in pain. Mike winced, knowing that he was helping but it was tearing him up that he was causing El pain. He simultaneously squeezed El's hand and put pressure on her wound to stop the bleeding.

"Keep the pressure on it nice and firm okay?" Max said knowing Mike was the best person to keep busy tending to El.

"We're gonna need water, soap," Max said to Nancy and Jonathan.

"Okay," Nancy said as they both rushed off to help.

Suddenly all three teens heard a strange sound. They turned to see that Lucas has dumped everything out of his bag. Mike stared up at him confused.

"Does any of this help?" Lucas asked innocently.

"No," Max said honestly. "Go get me a washcloth and a bowl."

"A bowl?" Lucas asked confused.

"Lucas," Max threatened.

Will hit his arm, trying to get Lucas out of Max's line of fire. He had no idea where to find these items but he knew they had to try.

"Okay El," Max said. "Once the bleeding stops it will start to feel better."

El squeezed Mike's hand tighter, hoping Max was right. After a few minutes, Max kept checking and the bleeding had indeed stopped.

"Ugh, where are those guys?!" Max said impatiently. "The bleeding has stopped now we need to get this wound cleaned."

Max huffed and got up. "I'll be right back."

"Oh man I can't believe Lucas is gonna die," Mike said trying to lighten the mood.

"Don't mess with Mad Max," El laughed lightly as she tried to sit up. She was starting to feel better now that the bleeding had stopped but there was still some pain.

"I should keep checking on this or she might kill me too," Mike said taking a look under the bandage.

"Ugh," Mike said looking back at El. "Does it hurt?"

"Mmmm not bad," El downplayed the pain. She knew Mike was worried about her and she didn't want to give him more of a reason.

Mike could tell by the look on her face that she wasn't telling the whole truth.

"You're gonna have an awesome scar," Mike said trying to look on the bright side. "You'll look even more badass."

"Bitchin," El said using her favorite word she learned last year.

"Yeah bitchin," Mike agreed with a laugh.

El smiled and tilted her head to the side. Right now, sitting with Mike, she felt like things were back to normal for the first time since they broke up. They were talking and laughing as they did before.

Mike decided that since things were going well and they were alone, this was his time to apologize.

"El," He said after trying to gather his thoughts.

"Yeah," El asked curiously, he looked worried.

"I've been meaning to tell you something," Mike began. "It's just… being broken up…it's been hard."

There was a slight crackle on the SuperCom, most likely frequencies getting crossed. Both teens turned back to each other.

"And I like that you and Max are friends now," Mike continued. "It's just…I was jealous at first and…and angry and that's why I said all that stupid stuff. And it's like I wanted you all to myself and now I realize how unfair that is and selfish and …I… I'm sorry."

El's face began showing the trace of a small smile. Her heart was swelling, Mike was saying all the right things in the nerdiest way possible. She could tell he was nervous and scared of her reaction. He was finally acknowledging what he did wrong, this is what she had been waiting for.

"I just…I've never felt like this….you know with anyone before and…" Mike tried to explain as she gestured between them. "Ya know they do say it makes you crazy."

"What makes you crazy?" El asked.

"You never heard…you never heard that term," Mike asked.

He had no idea why but he couldn't bring himself to say the words he felt. He was hoping she would catch on but of course, El wasn't good with turns of phrases.

"You know like the phrase 'blank makes you crazy' like the word," Mike tried again.

El looked at him perplexed. She really had no idea what he was talking about.

"Girlfriends?" El guessed.

"No no no no not girlfriends," Mike argued.

"Boyfriends," El said thinking she figured out the riddle.

"No no no no not boyfriends either," Mike attempted. "It's like..it's like a feeling….ya like something…"

El tried to piece together what Mike was telling her. A feeling?

"Old people say it to each other sometimes," Mike rambled.

"Old people?" El asked totally confused.

"Yeah! What I want to say….is" Mike stumbled.

EL looked at him with wide eyes, trying to get him to spit out whatever he wanted to say to her.

"… that….I just….I….know that I," Mike continued.

Suddenly the SuperCom sounded again, this time it was clear that it was someone's voice.

El's heart sank a bit, she really wanted to know what Mike was trying to tell her. El tried to hear as Mike and Dustin communicated over the radio that was breaking up throughout the conversation.

"DUSTIN!" Mike yelled as Dustin cut out completely.

"What is it?" Nancy asked as they returned with their supplies.

"Dustin," Mike tried to explain. "he said it was a code red but he cut out before I could find out more."

"Did he say something about the gate?" El asked.

"I think so," Mike said.

"But we don't even know where he is," Jonathan said.

"I can find him," El said quickly, trying to get herself to stand.

Mike rushed back over and placed his hand on her shoulder.

"Hey not yet," He said softly. "Let's get your leg fixed up then we find Dustin."

"Okay," El nodded and looked back to Nancy.

Max returned with the rest of the supplies shaking her head.

"Here we go," Max said taking the soap and water and mixing it.

"What's wrong?" Mike asked.

"Lucas found fireworks," Max rolled her eyes. "He says it's a backup plan."

"Ok El this might sting a little," Nancy said as she soaked cloth of soap and water.

"Ok," El said bracing herself. Mike sat next to her and took her hand.

Nancy began cleaning the wound gently, continuously looking up at El to make sure she was okay. She smirked slightly at Els's hand squeezing that of her little brother. Max had dropped the bomb that El dumped Mike but from the looks of things they seemed to be doing just fine. This made Nancy happy, she knew El was good for Mike, they needed each other. They had already been through so much together at a young age, that was bound to make an impact.

El tried to stay still and let Max and Nancy clean her wound. She was okay until the disinfectant, which stung a lot. She squeezed Mike's hand and tried to bite her lip to keep from crying out.

"There we go," Nancy said as she finished wrapping the wound in gauze. "Better?"

"Yes," El said sighing in relief. "Thank you."

"Where do you want to find Dustin?" Mike asked as he helped El to her feet. "There's no TV here."

"I just need something that makes a sound like background noise," El explained.

"What about the freezers?" Mike asked looking towards Nancy and Jonathan.

"Yeah," Jonathan shrugged. "I guess they make like a humming sound."

"I need a blindfold," El reminded Mike.

"I'm on it," Jonathan said running off.

Mike slipped his arm around El's waist and helped her to the freezer section.

"This should be good," El said stopping Mike in front of one of the freezer displays.

"Of course you choose this one," Mike laughed looking at a freezer full of egos.

Max and Mike helped El to sit on the ground. She looked at Mike and briefly stuck out her tongue in retaliation.

"Here you go," Jonathan said coming back with Lucas and Will. "This is all they had."

He handed El an American flag bandana. She folded it up and began to tie it around her head.

"That's great thanks," She opened the door of the freezer to hear the noise better, she focused in to try and figure out where Dustin was.

Everyone stayed silent as El went into the void. The freezers worked well, soon she was in the void looking around for Dustin. After a few minutes, she found him sitting in a seat at the movie theater. She couldn't tell what he was watching or if there was anyone with him. He wasn't saying anything because he was in the theater.

El tried to focus on the sounds around Dustin but she suddenly only heard her friend's voices.

"So what you prefer the original thing?" She heard Lucas say.

Ughhh she tried to block out the sounds of the voices but it was no use.

"It is the same concept," Lucas argued.

"No it's not," Mike argued back.

"Yes, it is!" Lucas said once again.

"Hey!" El said as she tore off her blindfold.

Everyone's heads turned to El quickly.

"Sorry," Mike said quickly forgetting El was trying to work.

"Sorry," Lucas said slightly embarrassed.

"Did you….find him?" Mike asked hoping he didn't ruin El's chances.

She stared back at them for a moment before answering. "Yes."

"Where are they?" Will asked.

"Movie theater," El replied.

"Alright let's go then," Nancy said.

Mike helped El off the floor, sliding his arm around her shoulder while she put hers around his waist

Lucas grabbed his cart full of fireworks and looked at the others with a confused expression.

"The movies?" Lucas mused. "Dustin's so freaked out about the gate that he decides to go watch a movie? Yeah makes total sense."

"You are positive he said gate and not great?" Max turned back to Mike and El.

"Yeah like this movie I'm watching is great," Will interjected.

"Sounded like gate," El assured the rest of the group.

"Which explains how the mind flayer is still alive," Mike agreed.

"Yeah we just have to shut up again," Nancy said simply.

"And the monster dies," Will explains.

"But if not we always have Lucas' fireworks," Max teased.

"Keep mocking my plan Max," Lucas shot back. "Keep mocking, I wanna hear you say it again because you keep doubting me. Keep doubting! Because I and Will are gonna prove you wrong right?!"

The group gathered everything and spend off towards the mall. It wasn't hard for them to get in, unknown to them, most of the guards were inside looking for the scoops troop. El used her powers to get passed any obstacle they had. Slowly they made their way to the upper level.

El moved towards the balcony where she could look down to the food court, she could hear voices.

"Stay back," She whispered to the rest. She moved slowly and quietly. She saw a bunch of armed men all moving in one direction.

She knew she had to get them out of the way so they could find Dustin and the group. She turned and saw a car sitting off to the side. She began to focus her powers. Soon the car alarm went off as the car began to shake.

The rest of the group began to inch forward as they heard the commotion. El focused on the car, then she brought her hand forward with one last push and the car went flying. It hit all three men and sent metal and glass flying everywhere.

She saw a group of people stand up from behind the counter, it was Dustin. As they all looked towards El she smiled back at them.

"Come on!" Lucas said rushing down to meet the rest of the party.

El began to take a step but felt a bit lightheaded.

"Wow," Mike said grabbing her arm as she swayed a bit. "Let me help."

El gratefully accepted as she made her way down the steps with Mike's help.

"You flung that thing like a hot wheels!" Dustin laughed as he rand towards El and Mike to hug them.

El had no idea what that meant but laughed anyway at her friend's reaction. Dustin was always the most amazed by her abilities.

"Lucas!" Erica yelled.

"What are you doing here?!" Lucas demanded.

"Ask them it's their fault," She accused.

"True…yeah… totally true," Steve said. "It's absolutely our fault."

"I don't understand what happened to that car," Robin said as if she was losing her mind.

"El has superpowers," Dustin said simply as he pointed in El's directions.

"I'm sorry?" Robin said in awe.

"Superpowers," Steve said again. "She threw it with her mind. Come on catch up."

"That's El!" Erica said shocked.

"Who's El?!" Robin yelled.

"I'm sorry," Nancy interjected. "Who are you?"

"I'm Robin," She said nervously. "I work with Steve."

"She cracked the top-secret code," Dustin explained.

"Yeah which is how we found out about the Russians in the first place," She said nonchalantly.

"Russians?" Jonathan asked. "Wait….what Russians?"

"The Russians!" Steve exclaimed.

"Those were Russians?" Max asked.

"Some of them," Erica shrugged.

"What are you talking about!?" Lucas said what everyone else was thinking.

"Didn't you hear our code red?" Dustin asked puzzled.

"Yeah, but I couldn't understand half of what you were saying," Mike explained.

"God damn low battery," Dustin yelled.

"How many times do I have to tell you with the low battery!" Steve said in a fatherly tone.

"Yeah well, everything worked out didn't it Steve?" Dustin argued.

"Worked out!" Erica yelled. "We almost died."

El wasn't sure if it was all the confusion and questions but her head was beginning to spin. Her ears started to ring and her leg began to throb. She began to step away from the group, sweat prickling her forehead from the pain.

Her nose began to trickle blood as she looked around, trying to figure out where that high-pitched noise was coming from. She brought her hands up over her ears as her friends continue to argue. Her head began to spin again and suddenly she was on the ground.

The group all turned in surprise. Mike, of course, ran into action first.

"El!" She yelled as he kneeled next to her. Everyone else followed suit.

"El," He said again as he rolled her onto her back. "What's wrong? What's wrong?"

Her eyes glazed over, she looked very out of it. Mike desperately wanted to take the pain away, but he couldn't help if she didn't tell them what was happening.

"My leg…..my leg," El whispered.

"Her leg," Jonathan said. "Okay her leg."

He and Nancy were right by her feet so they began to lift her pant leg. The bandage was bloody so they lifted it to reveal a bright, infected looking wound.

Everyone groaned at the sight of it, especially those who weren't there to see it originally.

Then something under the skin began to move, like a glowing worm. Everyone's eyes went wide, and they had no words for what they were seeing.

El began to cry out in pain as whatever it was moved around her leg.

"El….El!" Mike yelled trying to keep her talking.

Her teeth were clenched together as she groaned, her eyes still closed.

"El are you okay? El? El? El!" Mike continued.

Everyone looked on as the girl they so desperately needed let out an echoing scream.

Wow, that was intense. The next chapter is going to be more intense so get ready. We are almost done! Thanks for reading let me know what you think